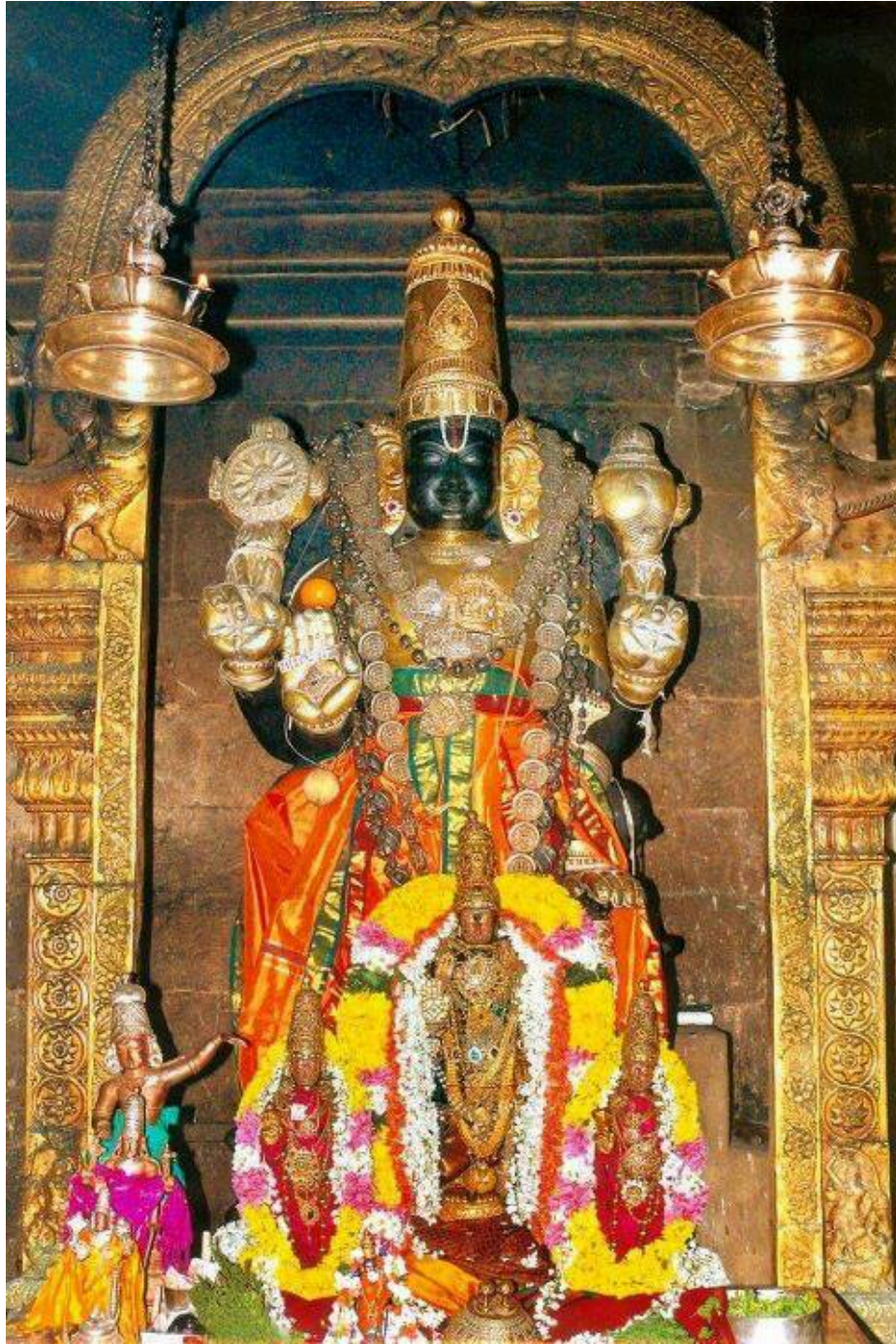


Kanchipuram

Benares of Southern India



Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal

Important temples in and around Kanchipuram:

1. Sri Deepa Prakasar Perumal Temple (or Thiruthanka)
2. Sri Ashtabujam Perumal Temple (or Sri Aadhikesava)
3. Sri Azhagiya Singar Perumal Temple (or Thiru Velukkai)
4. Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple (or Thiru Kanchi)
5. Sri Yatoktakari Temple (or Thiru Vekka)
6. Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple (or Thiru Ooragam) and Sri Thirukkaar Vaanar Temple (or Thirukkaar Vaanam)
7. Sri Vaikunda Perumal Temple (or Thiruparameshwara Vinnagaram)

8. *Sri Pandava Dhootha Temple (or Thiru Paadagam)*
9. *Sri Pachai Vannar Temple and Sri Pavalai Vannar Temple (or Thiru Pavala Vannan)*
10. *Sri Ekambaranathar Temple and Sri Nilathingal Thundathan Perumal Temple*
11. *Sri Kamakshi Temple and Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal Temple*
12. *Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal Temple (or Thiruputkuzhi)*
13. *Sri Koorathazhwan Temple at Kooram*
14. *Sriperumbudur (birthplace of Sripad Ramanujacarya, 32km from Kanchipuram)*
15. *Sri Veeraraghava Perumal Temple (or Tiruvallore)*
16. *Sri Bhatavatsala Perumal Temple (or Thiru Nindravoor)*
17. *Hare Krishna (ISKCON) Chennai Temple - Sri Sri Radha-Krishna Temple*
18. *Srinivasa Perumal Temple at Elanagar*
19. *Ramanujar Sannidhi at Sevilimedu*
20. *Ranganathar Temple at Nathamedu*
21. *Sri Lakshmi Narayana Perumal at Pulikkundram*
22. *Sri Adhi Kesava Perumal Temple at Kazhiyur*

Other temples: Sri Muktheeswarar temple, Sri Kachapeswarar temple, Sri Kumarakottam temple, Sri Kailasanathar temple

Kanchipuram, also known as *Benares of Southern India* or *The City of Temples*, is one of the most ancient and sacred cities of India. Kanchipuram is an eternally holy place and has some of the most magnificent temples. The *Garuda Purana* enumerates seven sacred cities (*sapta-moksha puri*) as giver of *moksha*. They are *Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kasi, Kanchipuram, Avantika (Ujjain) and Dwarka*. Kanchipuram is one of among such holy place. It is 75km from Chennai, 130km from Tirupati and 32km from Sriperumbudur (birthplace of Sripad Ramanujacarya).

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited Kanchipuram in year 1511 A.D. during His South India tour as mentioned in *Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta Madhya lila 9.68-70*. *Lord Balarama* visited Kanchipuram as mentioned *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 10 Chapter 79 verses 11-15. *Lord Nityananda Prabhu* also visited Kanchipuram during His pilgrimage to holy places. Great Vaishnava *acarya, Sripad Ramanujacarya*, spent a number of years in Kanchipuram in practising and preaching Vaishnava philosophy and rendering loving devotional services to *Lord Sri Varadaraja Swamy* (the principal Deity of Kanchipuram) and the Vaishnavas. Many great devotees like *Kanchipurna* and others also spent most of their life at Kanchipuram. Kanchipuram city is divided into two parts: *the Little Kanchi (or Vishnu Kanchi)* surrounding *Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple*, and *the Big Kanchi (or Siva Kanchi)* surrounding *Sri Ekambaranathar Temple*. Kanchipuram is also prominently known for silk industry. *Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta Madhya lila 9.68-70* mentions: *Arriving at Siva-kanci, Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited the deity of Lord Siva. By His influence, He converted all the devotees of Lord Siva into Vaishnavas. The Lord then visited a holy place known as Visnu-kanci. There He saw Laksmi-Narayana deities, and He offered His*

respects and many prayers to please Them. Visnu-kanci is situated about 5 miles away from Kanchipuram. It is here that Lord Varadaraja, another form of Lord Visnu, resides. There is also a big lake known as Ananta-sarovara. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu stayed at Visnu-kanci for 2 days, He danced and performed kirtana in ecstasy. When all the people saw Him, they were converted into devotees of Lord Krishna.

Lord Brahma's penance and Appearance of Sri Varadaraja Perumal

[Reference: His Holiness Radhanath Swami Maharaj's South India Yatra 2005]

It is only by the causeless infinite mercy of our beloved Guru Maharaj, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and our most merciful previous *acaryas* that today, we are blessed with the benediction of being in this eternally holy place, Kanchipuram. In the *Sri Sampradaya*, there are three most holy and important deities;

- o *Sri Ranganatha Swamy in Srirangam, Sri Varadaraja Perumal in Kanchipuram and Sri Venkateswara Balaji in Tirupati.*

In the histories of the *Azhwars*, there are profuse prayers glorifying these forms of the Lord, especially in the life of Sripad Ramanujacarya. The more we dive deeply into these most illuminating pastimes, the more our hearts overflow with gratitude, to have the opportunity to be here in this holy place and have the *darshan* of the Lord in this form.

In the *Satya Yuga*, Lord Brahma wanted to have the *darshan* of Lord Narayana and worship him with love and devotion. He performed penance for this purpose, and the Lord appeared in the form of the forest of *Naimisharanya*. Brahma wanted to see the personal form of the Lord. He carried on with his *tapasya*. In reciprocation, the Lord appeared in the form of water, the holy place *Pushkar*. Still, Brahma wanted to see the form of the Lord. The original, transcendental form of the Lord. This is not something easy to achieve. Brahma was told that he would have to perform 1000 Ashvamedha *yajnas*, in order to receive this benediction. Lord Brahma, he pleaded, he begged. *"This will take a very long time, and it's very difficult."* He was given a benediction. *"Go to Kanchipuram, where any spiritual act of devotion is multiplied by 1000 times over other places. If, there you do one Ashvamedha yajna, you will have the darshan of Lord Narayana."* Lord Brahma came here. He invited Saraswati Devi, his consort, but her inconceivable pastimes regarding the Lord's pastimes, she was not accessible.

Lord Brahma began the *yajna*. Like any *yajna*, impediments will come. It is the mercy of the Lord. In the age of Kali, there was only one *yajna* that is recommended in the Vedas, to achieve the ultimate goal of life. It is not the fire *yajna*, it is the *yajna* of the chanting of the holy names. In fact, Srila Prabhupada in Vrindavana, he had the high priests, monks, the Brijwasis to perform days and days of *yajnas*. In the meanwhile, the devotees were off to the side doing *Nama Sankirtana*. Prabhupada writes and purport that, *"The real installation that invited the deities to come, was the sincere devotional chanting of the holy names of the devotees."*

*Krishna-varnam tvisa Krishnam sangopangastra-parsadam
yajnaiḥ sankīrtana-prayair yajanti hi su-medhasah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 11 chapter 5 verse 32)*

In this age of Kali, the Yuga avatar appears to teach the Yuga Dharma: Harinama Sankirtana.

We all have experienced that, when we perform Harinama Sankirtana, do our Japa, many impediments will come, to try to stop our progress. The impediments come from within, impediments come from without. Those impediments are coming by the will of the Lord because in the face of those impediments, we either have to perish, remain lukewarm neophytes, or we have to surrender to the Lord. There is no other alternative. We have to take shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krishna. Therefore, Caitanya Mahaprabhu told His devotees that, "Obstacles are the servants of the Lord. Obstacles in the path of devotion are necessary, because human nature is to be complacent. Human nature is to be ritualistic." Even in a spiritual life, it is a strong tendency and none of us are exempt. We all have this human nature, that we take sacred things to be ordinary. And even when we perform our religious duties, they become routine, they become ritualistic. We chant the names of the Lord just to get the number done, without really taking shelter. We come before the deity in a lackadaisical way.

*vipadah santu tvaḥ sasvat tatra tatra jagad-guro
(Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1 chapter 8 verse 25)*

This was Kunti Devi's prayer. That, "Let calamities, let unbearable obstacles come in my life, because then I have no other alternative but to really take shelter of you in great need." When everything is going very nicely, it is an opportunity to sincerely surrender. When things go against the grain of our plan or expectations, when there's crisis, disaster, great impediments, a sincere devotee does not lose faith, does not lose enthusiasm. A sincere devotee understands, this is a benediction. Now I have no alternative, but to take shelter, to surrender.

*Factually, that is what Bhakti is about, taking shelter of the Lord Krishna. I am not the doer, Lord Krishna is the doer. To acknowledge that fact is very difficult for a conditioned soul. We can do it verbally and mentally, but from the heart, our tendency is to complain, our tendency is to find fault in others. Our tendency is to blame, either the environment or people around us for the inadequacies we have. Yes, you can complain and you can convince the whole world of the truth that justifies your dilemma, but there is a problem. You make **Zero** spiritual advancement by doing so. Why should we try to convince people of this world, how we are right and how the difficulties I am going through, are not my fault? We get nowhere.*

*tat te 'nukampam su-samīksamano bhunjana evatma-kṛtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapur-bhir vidadhan namas te jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya-bhak*

"My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim."

(Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 10 chapter 14 verse 8)

This was spoken by Lord Brahma. He knows, when difficulties come, we have to, with folded palms, thank God, thank Krishna. Now for difficulties to actually be difficulties. It cannot be the difficulties that we select. "Krishna, I will surrender to you with this difficulty or that difficulty. I have a whole list of difficulties, and which will help me surrender." The problem is this. If it is on your list, it is not really a difficulty. The real difficulties are things that come, that really we don't want, really we didn't expect. Even if we did expect it, it was what we were praying not to happen.

Getting stripped naked in the assembly of gurus was not on Draupadi's list, but it was worse than death. She took shelter of Krishna. Being bereft off all of his wealth, his reputation. Be rejected by his family members and all of his friends, was not on the list of the Avanti Brahmana. It was just the medicine that the doctor ordered, for him to surrender to Krishna wholeheartedly. Follow in the footsteps of the great souls. Today, it is very hot in this very beautiful mandap. There is not much circulation of air. Are any of you suffering? This might not be what you travelled all across the world for, to come to South India, to be under the cool ocean breezes, under the palm trees. It is a perfect arrangement, to take shelter of hearing the glories of the Lord.

Many obstacles came in Lord Brahma's execution of his *yajna*. First, the great river came, the massive river, massive river that was just going to wash away the entire *yajyashala*. Then Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and Lord Narayana appeared as *Vega Sethu*. The Lord appeared as a deity sleeping on Ananta-Sesa. He was like a dam that stopped the flow of the river, Meghavati River.

Then, demons created complete darkness. How do you perform *yajna* in complete darkness? Lord Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and the Lord appeared in another form, *Deepak Prakash*, and created wonderful light. Then the demons sent a ferocious beast, *Sharabha* (snake) and the Lord appeared with eight arms (*Ashtabhuja*) and killed the demon in the form of *Ashtabhuja*. Then all the other demons were just gathered around, just harassing Brahma, trying to do everything possible to stop this *yajna*. Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared on the call of Brahma. These are self-manifesting deities, of all of these forms of the Lord, here in Kanchipuram. With Lord Krishna's grace, we will visit some of these temples.

Most importantly, Brahma continued performing his *yajna*. At the successful conclusion of the *yajna* in which he prayed with pure devotion for Lord Vishnu to appear, because

please understand, it is not just the ritual of the *yajna* that invokes the presence of the Lord. It is the feeling, the intention in which it is being offered. That is why *yajnas* by Brahmans who really don't care anything about you, are just doing it for money, the affect is very minimal. *Brahmanas* who are performing in a spirit of compassion, to help you. Who are doing it with great faith and devotion, their offerings are very pleasingly accepted by the Lord.

Srila Prabhupada says that "Lord Krishna does not accept what you offer Him. Krishna accepts the purpose in which something is offered. Krishna accepts the intention of your heart." Therefore it is very important to have very pure-hearted priests and very pure-hearted pujaris, because the intentions and the purpose and the purity of their offerings is very much, what the Lord is accepting.

Lord Brahma completed his *yajna*, and from the fire came a magnificent *Vimana*. Within that *Vimana*, was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His beautiful four-arm form. Because He came to the world to be the king of all bestowers of blessings, His name is *Varadaraja*.

It is this Varadaraja Swamy who is the predominating deity of Vishnu Kanchi. Everyone, please be sure you do go for the darshan and offer your prayers of love and devotion because Lord Varadaraja will bestow blessings upon us. What should we ask for? We should not ask the absolute truth for mundane things of this world. We should ask the absolute truth Sri Varadaraja, for the highest blessing. The blessing of eternal service to His devotees, the blessing of pure, unalloyed love, unconditional in all circumstances. From that time of Satya Yuga, Lord Sri Varadaraja Swamy is one of the most prominent deities on earth, worshiped by great acaryas. Sri Ramanujacarya resided, here in Kanchipuram. He daily worshiped Sri Varadaraja with great love and devotion.

Kanchipuram was the historical capital of the Pallavas. It was under Pallavas from 6th to 8th century A.D. and later became the citadel of Cholas and Vijayanagar kings. During the 6th and 7th centuries, the Pallavas built some of the best temples in the city. Kanchipuram was also a great seat of learning. many scholars both in Sanskrit and Tamil flourished here. Yuan Chwang, a famous Chinese traveller visited the city in the 7th century and said that this city was 6 miles in circumference and famous for piety and veneration for spiritual learning.

1. Sri Deepa Prakasar Perumal Temple (or Thiruthanka)

Sri Deepa Prakasar Perumal Temple or Sri Vilakkoli Perumal is one among the 108 *Divya Desams* of Lord Visnu. This temple is the 45th *Divya Desam*. [A *Divya Desam* is one of the 108 Vishnu temples that are revered by the 12 Azhwars (great saints) in the *Divya Prabandha*, a collection of 4,000 Tamil verses. *Divya* means "premium" and *Desam* indicates "place" (temple). Of the 108 temples, 105 are in India, one is in Nepal, and

last two are outside the Earthly realms. The Divya Desams are revered by the 12 Azhwars in the Divya Prabandha, a collection of 4,000 Tamil verses.]

Pastime: In the *Satya Yuga*, Lord Brahma wanted to have the *darshan* of Lord Narayana and worship him with love and devotion. He performed penance for this purpose, and the Lord appeared in the form of the forest of *Naimisharanya*. Brahma wanted to see the personal form of the Lord. He carried on with his *tapasya*. In reciprocation, the Lord appeared in the form of water, the holy place *Pushkar*. Still, Brahma wanted to see the form of the Lord. The original, transcendental form of the Lord. This is not something easy to achieve. Brahma was told that he would have to perform 1000 *Ashvamedha yajnas*, in order to receive this benediction. Lord Brahma, he pleaded, he begged. *"This will take a very long time, and it's very difficult."* He was given a benediction. *"Go to Kanchipuram, where any spiritual act of devotion is multiplied by 1000 times over other places. If, there you do one Ashvamedha yajna, you will have the darshan of Lord Narayana."* Lord Brahma came here. He invited Saraswati Devi, his consort, but her inconceivable pastimes regarding the Lord's pastimes, she was not accessible.

Lord Brahma began the *yajna*. Many obstacles came in Lord Brahma's execution of his *yajna*. First, the great river came, the massive river, massive river that was just going to wash away the entire *yajyashala*. Then Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and Lord appeared as *Vega Sethu*. The Lord appeared as a deity sleeping on Ananta-Sesa. He was like a dam that stopped the flow of the river, Meghavati River.

Then, demons created complete darkness. How do you perform yajna in complete darkness? Lord Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and the Lord Narayana appeared in another form, Deepak Prakash, and created wonderful light. Since, the darkness was taken away, the Perumal there is called as "Deepaprakasar". Deepam means light and Prakasam is said as the flash referred to as the light of spread out to take away the darkness. Since the Perumal gave light, the Perumal is called as "Vilakku Oli Perumal". It means the Perumal gave light.

Temple: The deity at Sri Deepa Prakasar Perumal Temple is facing west direction. This is a big temple with huge *Vaagana Mandapam*. The temple is located in *Vishnu Kanchi* along with most other Vaishnava temples in Kanchipuram. The temple has a three-tiered *rajagopuram*, the gateway tower. The central shrine of the temple has the presiding deity, *Deepaprakasar Perumal*. There are shrines for Lakshmi Hayagriva, Andal, Vedanta Desika and Azhwars. The place is also known by the name *Thoopul* as it was dense with *Dharba* grass.

*This is the birthplace of **Sri Vedanta Desika** (or Swami Desikan, Swami Vedanta Desikan, Thoopul Nigamaantha Desikan). Vedanta Desika (1268–1370) was one of the most brilliant stalwarts of Sri Vaishnavism in the post-Ramanuja period. He was an ardent devotee of Deepa Prakasar Temple at Thoppul. Sri Desikan is a gift to his mother who prayed to Lord seeking child boon. Responding to her prayer, Lord of Tirupati - Lord Venkatachalapathi Balaji asked the Bell in His hand to be born the son of the mother. For this reason, Bell is not used during pujas in Tirupati Balaji temple after this event. Born in the year 1268, Sri Desikar was centenarian plus till 1369. He was an outstanding scholar of highest degree in the Vaishnava scriptures. He rendered a large number of Sanskrit works in Tamil. He has also authored in Tamil the Adaikala Pathu (Asylum 10) on Lord Varadaraja Perumal. There is a separate shrine for Lord Hayagriva along with Vedanta Desika.*

The *Brahmostavam* festival during the Tamil month of *Puratasi* (Sep - Oct) is the major festival celebrated in Vedanta Desika shrine. During the festival, the festival deity of Desika is carried to the Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple. Sri Vedanta Desika had unparalleled devotion to Lord Varadaraja Perumal which was evidently visible in one of his compositions *Varadaraja Panchasat*, he sung praising the glories of Lord in sacred 50 verses. During *Brahmostavam* of Lord Varadaraja pays visit to Thupool and resides here for 3 days. On *Garuda Seva* day, Lord Varadaraja presents His garlands to Desika *acarya* and pays tribute to His fervent devotee. In this way Lord pays continuous visit and homage to His devotee during the *Brahmostavam*. Lord Varadaraja pays periodic visits to Thupool on the auspicious days of *Chaitra Pournami* and on the 12th day after *Vaikundha Ekadashi*. The temple tank, *Saraswathi Theertham*, is located outside the premises. A shrine is dedicated to Vedanta Desika facing South is seen in the temple. Desika's son Nayina Varadachari completed the construction of this temple.



Sri Deepa Prakasar Perumal Temple or Sri Vilakkoli Perumal

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2. Sri Ashtabujam (or Sri Aadhikesava Perumal Temple)

Gajendra Varada Perumal

Sri Ashtabhuja temple is 2km from Sri Varadaraja Perumal temple. This temple is the 44th Divya Desam dedicated to Lord Visnu.

Pastime 1: In continuation of pastime from above (Sri Deepa Prakasar Temple), after Lord Narayana appeared as *Deepak Prakash*, to dissipate the darkness created by demons to disrupt Lord Brahma's *yajna*, the demons sent a ferocious beast, Sharabha (snake). Lord appeared with eight arms (*Ashtabhuja*) and killed the demon in the form of *Ashtabhuja holding eight different weapons in His arms*. The Lord holds a *disc (chakra)*, *sword*, *a flower* and *an arrow* on His four right hands, and *conch (sanka)*, *bow*, *kedayam (armour which is used to protect while fighting using a sword)* and *club (gadha)* in His four left hands. The snake is found on the Vaayu end of the *yajna sala* as "Sarabeswaran" in this temple. This is the only Visnu temple with a *Mangalasanam* dedicated exclusively for Mother Alarmel Mangai. Lord Visnu was in this place as *Adi Kesava Perumal* even before His fame as *Ashtabhuja Perumal*.

Pastime 2: Another pastime associated with this temple is that of ***Gajendra moksha***. In front of the temple is the *Gajendra Pushkarani*. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 8 chapters 2 to 4 describe *Gajendra moksha* pastime. (<http://www.vedabase.com/en/sb/8/2>)

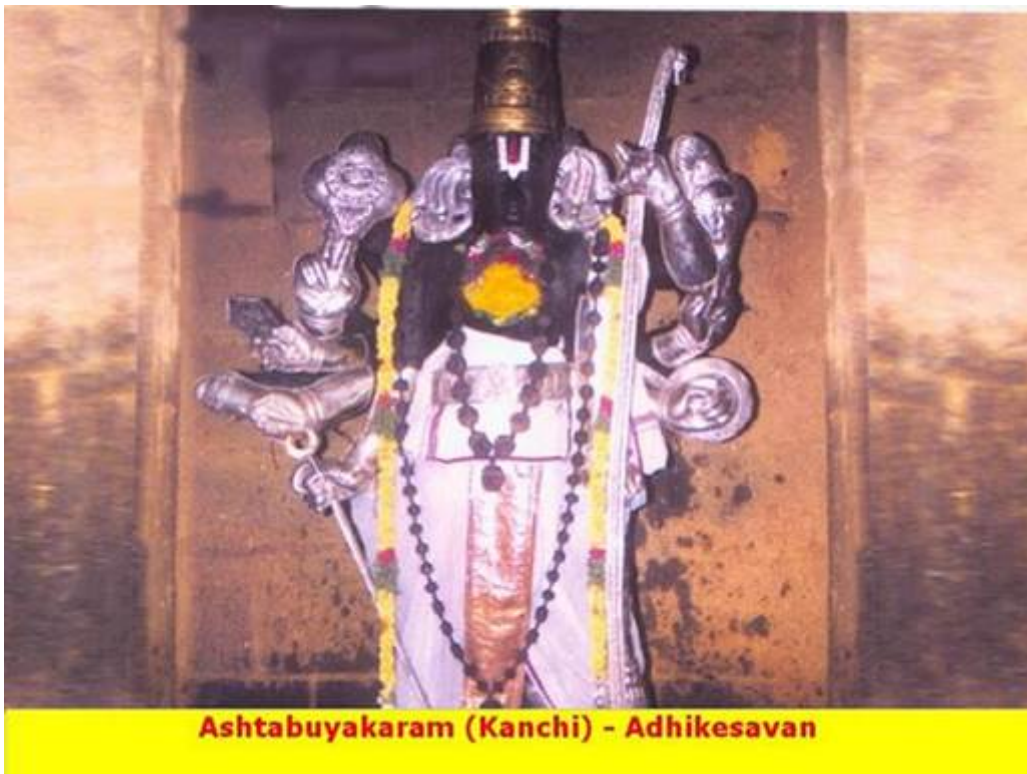
This pastime happened during the reign of the fourth Manu. Once the chief of the elephants, Gajendra, along with female elephants, went to enjoy bathing in that lake, and they disturbed the inhabitants of the water. Because of this, the chief crocodile in that water, who was very powerful, immediately attacked the elephant's leg. Thus there ensued a great fight between the elephant and the crocodile. This fight continued for 1000 years. Neither the elephant nor the crocodile died, but since they were in the water, the elephant gradually became weak whereas the power of the crocodile increased more and more. Then the elephant, being helpless and seeing that there was no other way for his protection, sought shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna.

Gajendra offered following prayers, *"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna is the cause of all causes, the original person from whom everything has emanated. He is the root cause of this cosmic manifestation, and the entire cosmos rests in Him, yet He is transcendental, for He does everything in relation to the material world through His external energy. He is eternally situated in the spiritual world - in Vaikuntha or Goloka Vrindavana - where He engages in His eternal pastimes. The material world is a product of His external energy, or material nature, which works under His direction. It is thus that creation, maintenance and annihilation take place. The Lord exists at all times. This is extremely difficult for a non-devotee to understand. Although the transcendental Lord Krishna is perceivable by everyone, only the pure devotees perceive His presence and activities. The Lord is completely free from material birth, death, old age and disease. Indeed, if anyone in this material world takes shelter of Him, he also becomes situated in that transcendental position. For the satisfaction of the devotee (paritranaya sadhunam), the Lord appears and exhibits His activities. His appearance, disappearance and other pastimes are not at all material. One who knows this secret can enter the kingdom of God. In the Lord, all opposing elements are adjusted. The Lord is situated in everyone's heart. He is the controller of everything, He is the witness of all activities, and He is the original source of all living entities. Indeed, all living entities are parts of Him, for He is the origin of Maha-Visnu, who is the source of the living entities within this material world. The Lord can observe the activities of our senses, which can work and achieve material results because of His mercy. Although He is the original source of everything, He is untouched by any of His by-products. In this way He is like a gold mine, which is the source of gold in ornaments and yet is different from the ornaments themselves. The Lord is worshiped by the method prescribed in the Pancaratras. He is the source of our knowledge, and He can give us liberation. Therefore it is our duty to understand Him according to the instructions of devotees, in particular*

the spiritual master. Although for us the mode of goodness is covered, by following the instructions of saintly persons and the spiritual master we can be freed from material clutches. The self-effulgent material form of Lord is adored by non-devotees, His impersonal form is adored by those advanced in spiritual knowledge, and His feature as the localized Supersoul is appreciated by yogis. But His original form as a person is understood only by devotees. That Supreme Personality of Godhead is competent to dissipate the darkness of the conditioned soul through His instructions in Bhagavad-Gita. He is the ocean of transcendental qualities and can be understood only by liberated persons freed from the bodily concept of life. By His causeless mercy, the Lord can rescue the conditioned soul from the material clutches and enable him to return home, back to Godhead, to become His personal associate. Nonetheless, a pure devotee does not aspire to go back to Godhead; he is simply satisfied with executing his service in this material world. A pure devotee does not ask anything from Lord Krishna. His only prayer is to be freed from the material conception of life and to be engaged in the Lord's transcendental loving service."

In this way the King of the elephants, Gajendra, offered prayers directly to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna without mistaking Him for one of the demigods. None of the demigods came to see him, not even Brahma or Siva. Rather, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana, seated on Garuda, personally appeared before him. Gajendra, by lifting his trunk, offered obeisances to the Lord, and the Lord immediately pulled him from the water along with the crocodile who had captured his leg. Then the Lord killed the crocodile and thus rescued Gajendra. When Gajendra, by the mercy of the Lord, became one of the Lord's associates in Vaikuntha, he got four hands. This achievement is called *sarupya-mukti*, or the liberation of receiving a spiritual body exactly like that of Narayana.

Temple: Saints Peyazhwar and Tirumangai Azhwar had sung the glory of *Lord Ashtabhuj Perumal* in their *Mangalasanam* hymns. Vedanta Desikar, Manavala Maamuni also has done *Mangalasanam*. A separate *Mangalasanam* is addressed to Mother by Azhwar only in this temple. Vedanta Desikar wrote the *stotra* called "*Ashtabhuj Ashtakam*". This *stotra* is about Lord in His form with eight *Divyabhujas* in the *Divya kshetram* called *Attabhuj Karam*. This temple was built by Thondaiman Chakravarthy who is popularly named as Vayiramoghan. The temple also has altars dedicated to Hanuman, Azhwars, Andal, Chakra and Sarabeswara. *Paal Payasam* (Milk Kheer), *Aval* and *Appam* are delicious *prasadam*s at this temple.



Ashtabuyakaram (Kanchi) - Adhikesavan

Lord Sri Ashtabujam Perumal (or Sri Aadhikesava Perumal)

In continuation of pastime from above (Sri Deepa Prakasar Temple), after Lord Narayana appeared as Deepak Prakash, to dissipate the darkness created by demons to disrupt Lord Brahma's yajna, the demons sent a ferocious beast, Sharabha (snake). Lord appeared with eight arms (Ashtabhuja) and killed the demon in the form of Ashtabhuja holding eight different weapons in His arms. The Lord holds a disc (chakra), sword, a flower and an arrow on His four right hands, and conch (sanka), bow, kedayam (armour which is used to protect while fighting using a sword) and club (gadha) in His four left hands.



Utsav deities - Lord Sri Ashtabujam Perumal

Another pastime associated with this temple is that of Gajendra moksha. Once the chief of the elephants, Gajendra, along with female elephants, went to enjoy bathing in that lake, and they disturbed the inhabitants of the water. Because of this, the chief crocodile in that water, who was very powerful,

immediately attacked the elephant's leg. Thus there ensued a great fight between the elephant and the crocodile. This fight continued for 1000 years. Neither the elephant nor the crocodile died, but since they were in the water, the elephant gradually became weak whereas the power of the crocodile increased more and more. Then the elephant, being helpless and seeing that there was no other way for his protection, sought shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna.



Sri Ashtabujam Perumal temple

Gajendra offered following prayers, "The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna is the cause of all causes, the original person from whom everything has emanated. He is the root cause of this cosmic manifestation, and the entire cosmos rests in Him, yet He is transcendental, for He does everything in relation to the material world through His external energy. He is eternally situated in the spiritual world - in Vaikuntha or Goloka Vrindavana - where He engages in His eternal pastimes. The material world is a product of His external energy, or material nature, which works under His direction. It is thus that creation, maintenance and annihilation take place. The Lord exists at all times. This is extremely difficult for a non-devotee to understand.



In front of the temple is the Gajendra Pushkarani

Although the transcendental Lord Sri Krishna is perceivable by everyone, only the pure devotees perceive His presence and activities. Lord is completely free from material birth, death, old age and disease. Indeed, if anyone in this material world takes shelter of Him, he also becomes situated in that transcendental position. For the satisfaction of the devotee (paritranaya sadhunam), the Lord appears and exhibits His activities. His appearance, disappearance and other pastimes are not at all material. One who knows this secret can enter the kingdom of God. In the Lord, all opposing elements are adjusted.



Gajendra Pushkarani

The Lord is situated in everyone's heart. He is the controller of everything, He is the witness of all activities, and He is the original source of all living entities. Indeed, all living entities are parts of Him, for He is the origin of Maha-Visnu, who is the source of the living entities within this material world. The Lord can observe the activities of our senses, which can work and achieve material results because of His mercy. Although He is the original source of everything, He is untouched by any of His by-products. In this way He is like a gold mine,

which is the source of gold in ornaments and yet is different from the ornaments themselves. The Lord is worshiped by the method prescribed in the Pancaratras. He is the source of our knowledge, and He can give us liberation. Therefore it is our duty to understand Him according to the instructions of devotees, in particular the spiritual master.



Although for us the mode of goodness is covered, by following the instructions of saintly persons and the spiritual master we can be freed from material clutches. The self-effulgent material form of the Lord is adored by non-devotees, His impersonal form is adored by those advanced in spiritual knowledge, and His feature as the localized Supersoul is appreciated by yogis.

But His original form as a person is understood only by devotees. That Supreme Personality of Godhead is competent to dissipate the darkness of the conditioned soul through His instructions in Bhagavad-Gita. He is the ocean of transcendental qualities and can be understood only by liberated persons freed from the bodily concept of life. By His causeless mercy, the Lord can rescue the conditioned soul from the material clutches and enable him to return home, back to Godhead, to become His personal associate. Nonetheless, a pure devotee does not aspire to go back to Godhead; he is simply satisfied with executing his service in this material world. A pure devotee does not ask anything from the Lord.



His only prayer is to be freed from the material conception of life and to be engaged in the Lord's transcendental loving service." In this way the King of the elephants, Gajendra, offered prayers to Lord Krishna without mistaking Him for one of the demigods. None of the demigods came to see him, not even Brahma or Siva. Rather, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana, seated on Garuda, personally appeared before him. Gajendra, by lifting his trunk, offered obeisances to the Lord, and the Lord immediately pulled him from the water along with the crocodile who had captured his leg. Then the Lord killed the crocodile and thus rescued Gajendra. When Gajendra, by the mercy of the Lord, became one of the Lord's associates in Vaikuntha, he got four hands. This achievement is called sarupya-mukti, or the liberation of receiving a spiritual body exactly like that of Narayana.

3. Sri Azhagiya Singar Perumal Temple (or Thiru Velukkai)

Lord Nrsimhadeva temple (or Sundhara Yogha Narasimha Perumal)

Sri Azhagiya Singar Perumal Temple is ½km from Sri Ashtabhuja Temple. This temple is the 46th Divya Desam dedicated to Lord Visnu.

Pastime: In continuation of pastime from above (Sri Deepa Prakasar Temple and Sri Ashtabhuja Temple), after ferocious demon Sharabha (snake) was killed by Sri Ashtabhuja Perumal, all the demons gathered and harassing Lord Brahma to do everything possible to stop his *yajna*. Then Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared on the call of Brahma. The Lord chased the *asuras* away and decided to stay here out of His own desire to continue protecting His devotees. Since the Perumal itself wished to stay there to help his devotees, this *sthalam* is known as "Vellukkai". "Vel" means wish with pure

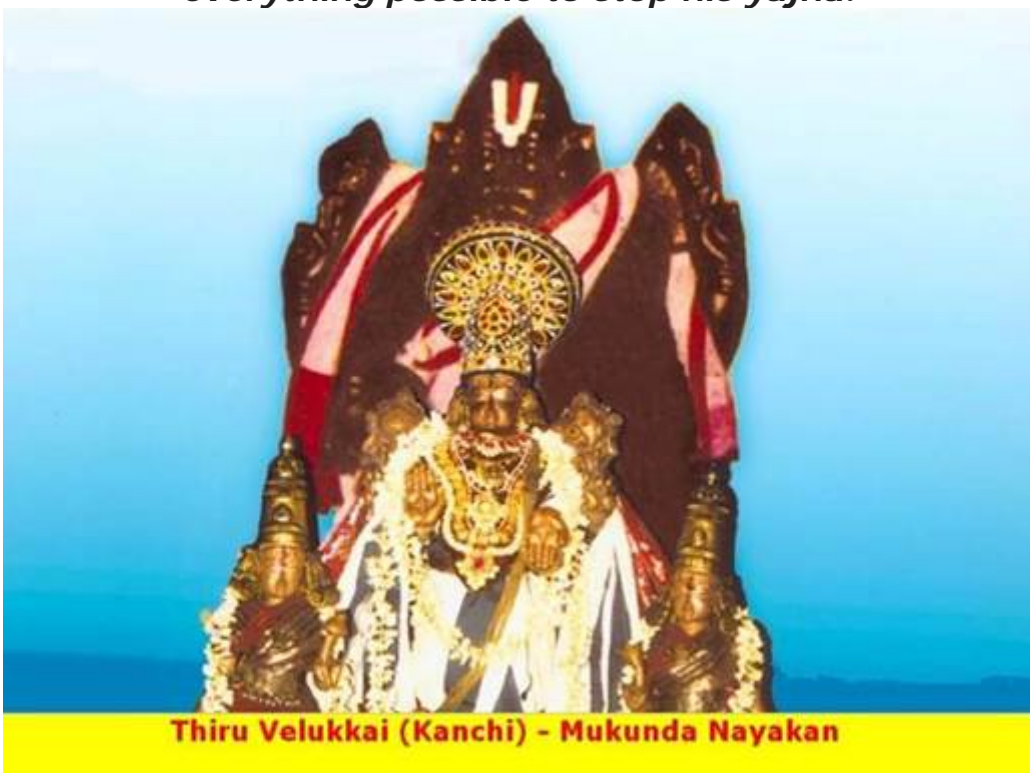
affection or love and "ukkai" means satisfying. To ride away the asuras, Lord Nrsimhadeva sits in Yoga position facing west direction as "Yoga Narasimar".

Temple: Sri Vaishnava *acarya*, Vedanta Desikar had praised Perumal in his celebrated *Kamasikashtakam* (*Kamaasi: Kama + Aasika - standing on His own wish*). The *vimana* above the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Nrsimhadeva is called *Kanaka Vimanam*. Sage Brugu had worshipped Perumal in this temple. *Sri Sudarsana Chakkarathazhwar* the deity of Lord Vishnu's disc graces from a shrine in the outer corridor. Garuda in the Nrsimhadeva shrine appears with his head slightly on a side as if unable to bear the fury of the Lord. The temple is also known as *Kamashika Narasimha Sannadhi*.



Sri Azhagiya Singar Perumal Temple

In continuation of pastime from above (Sri Deepa Prakasar Temple and Sri Ashtabhuja Temple), after ferocious demon Sharabha (snake) was killed by Sri Ashtabhuja Perumal, all the demons gathered and harassing Lord Brahma to do everything possible to stop his yajna.



Thiru Velukkai (Kanchi) - Mukunda Nayakan

Thiru Velukkai or Lord Nrsimhadeva or Sundhara Yogha Narasimha

Then Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared on the call of Brahma. The Lord chased the asuras away and decided to stay here out of His own desire to continue protecting His devotees. Since the Perumal itself wished to stay there to help his devotees, this sthalam is known as "Vellukkai". "Vel" means wish with pure affection or love and "ukkai" means satisfying. To ride away the asuras, Lord Nrsimhadeva sits in Yoga position facing west direction as "Yoga Narasimar".



Utsav deities of Sri Azhagiya Singar Perumal

4. Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple (or Thiru Kanchi)

Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple is also called as Devaraja Swamy temple. The shrine is on an elephant-shaped rock called Hastigiri. From that time of Satya Yuga, Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal is one of the most prominent deities on earth, worshiped by great acaryas. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple during His visit to Kanchipuram in year 1511 A.D. Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta Madhya lila 9.69-70 mentions: The Lord then visited a holy place known as Visnu-kanci. There He saw Laksmi-Narayana deities, and He offered His respects and many prayers to please Them. Visnu-kanci is situated about 5 miles away from Kanchipuram. It is here that Lord Varadaraja, another form of Lord Visnu, resides. There is also a big lake known as Ananta-sarovara. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu stayed at Visnu-kanci for 2 days, He danced and performed kirtana in ecstasy. When all the people saw Him, they were converted into devotees of Lord Krishna.

Sri Ramanujacarya resided here in Kanchipuram, and he daily worshiped Sri Varadaraja with great love and devotion. We must offer our prayers of love and devotion because Lord Varadaraja will bestow blessings upon us. We should ask the absolute truth Sri Varadaraja, for the highest blessing. The blessing of eternal service to His devotees, the blessing of pure, unalloyed love, unconditional in all circumstances. We should not ask the absolute truth for mundane things of this world.

Pastime: In the *Satya Yuga*, Lord Brahma wanted to have the *darshan* of Lord Narayana and worship him with love and devotion. He performed penance for this purpose, and the Lord appeared in the form of the forest of *Naimisharanya*. Brahma wanted to see the personal form of the Lord. He carried on with his *tapasya*. In reciprocation, the Lord appeared in the form of water, the holy place *Pushkar*. Still, Brahma wanted to see the form of the Lord. The original, transcendental form of the Lord. This is not something easy to achieve. Brahma was told that he would have to perform 1000 *Ashvamedha yajnas*, in order to receive this benediction. Lord Brahma, he pleaded, he begged. *"This will take a very long time, and it's very difficult."* He was given a benediction. *"Go to Kanchipuram, where any spiritual act of devotion is multiplied by 1000 times over other places. If, there you do one Ashvamedha yajna, you will have the darshan of Lord Narayana."* Lord Brahma came here. He invited Saraswati Devi, his consort, but her inconceivable pastimes regarding the Lord's pastimes, she was not accessible.

Lord Brahma began the *yajna*. Like any *yajna*, impediments will come. Many obstacles came in Lord Brahma's execution of his *yajna*. First, the great river came, the massive river, massive river that was just going to wash away the entire *yajyashala*. Then Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and Lord Narayana appeared as *Vega Sethu*. The Lord appeared as a deity sleeping on Ananta-Sesa. He was like a dam that stopped the flow of the river, Meghavati River. Then, demons created complete darkness. How do you perform *yajna* in complete darkness? Lord Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and the Lord Narayana appeared in another form, *Deepak Prakash*, and created wonderful light. Then the demons sent a ferocious beast, Sharabha (snake) and the Lord appeared with eight arms (*Ashtabhuja*) and killed the demon in the form of *Ashtabhuja*. Then all the other demons were just gathered around, just harassing Brahma, trying to do everything possible to stop this *yajna*. Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared on the call of Brahma. These are self-manifesting deities, of all of these forms of the Lord, here in Kanchipuram. With Lord Krishna's grace, we will visit some of these temples.

Brahma continued performing his *yajna*. At the successful conclusion of the *yajna* in which he prayed with pure devotion for Lord Vishnu to appear, because please understand, it is not just the ritual of the *yajna* that invokes the presence of the Lord. It is the feeling, the intention in which it is being offered. That is why *yajnas* by Brahmans who really don't care anything about you, are just doing it for money, the affect is very minimal. *Brahmanas* who are performing in a spirit of compassion, to help you. Who are doing it with great faith and devotion, their offerings are very pleasingly accepted by the Lord. Lord Brahma completed his *yajna*, and from the fire came a magnificent *Vimana*. Within that *Vimana*, was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His beautiful four-arm form. Because He came to the world to be the king of all bestowers of blessings, His name is *Varadaraja*.

It is this Varadaraja Swamy who is the predominating deity of Vishnu Kanchi. Lord Varadaraja is the bestower of blessings upon everyone. What should we ask for? We should not ask the absolute truth for mundane things of this world. We should ask the

absolute truth Sri Varadaraja, for the highest blessing. The blessing of eternal service to His devotees, the blessing of pure, unalloyed love, unconditional in all circumstances. Sri Ramanujacarya resided here in Kanchipuram. He daily worshiped Sri Varadaraja with great love and devotion.

Golden and Silver Lizards pastime: Two disciples of Gautama Rishi used to fill water every day for their Guru. One day, to their shock, they found a lizard jumping out when they placed the tumbler in front of their Guru. An angry Rishi cursed the two for their carelessness and they instantly turned into Lizards. The two disciples stayed here at Kanchipuram as lizards until Indra came to worship Varadarajan Perumal and relieved them from their curse. In memory of this, there is a golden lizard and a silver lizard outside the Varadarajan Sannidhi.

Temple: *Thirukkachi Athigiri - Varadaraja Perumal temple* is referred to as the 'Perumal Koil' among *Divya Desams*. While *Srirangam* is referred to as 'The Koil' and *Tirupati* as the 'Malai' among *Divya Desams*. There are two big *Gopurams* - the Eastern *Gopuram* built by Krishnadeva Raaya and the Western temple tower built by the Pallavas. Temple has beautiful pavilions in the courtyard and a remarkable 100 pillared hall which has sculptures depicting Ramayana, episodes from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and pastimes of Lord Krishna carved on many of the panels. Lord Varadharaja Swamy resides in the upper *prakaram*. Beneath the *Sannidhi* (altar) there is a shrine for *Yoga Nrsimhadeva*. Within the enclosure of the temple is a sacred Pushkarini called *Anantha Sarovara*. Apart from the main deity, the temple has the wooden deity of Varadaraja Swamy preserved within a silver box from which water is pumped out every 40 years. There are two long *Mandapas* under the tank north of the 100 pillar mandapam in the temple, where the 40 feet long *Athi Varadaraja Perumal* in his reclining posture is placed. The wooden deity is brought out for the *darshan* of the devotees once in forty years. Special Pujas are offered to Perumal. The temple has a fabulous collection of ancient and precious jewellery presented by the Vijayanagar rulers, Muslim rulers and also the English rulers. There is a very costly necklace presented by Robert Clive of East India Company.



Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple

From that time of Satya Yuga, Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal is one of the most prominent deities on earth, worshiped by great acaryas. Sri Caitanya

Mahaprabhu visited Sri Varadaraja Swamy Temple during His visit to Kanchipuram in year 1511 A.D. Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta Madhya lila 9.69-70 mentions: The Lord then visited a holy place known as Visnu-kanci. There He saw Laksmi-Narayana deities, and He offered His respects and many prayers to please Them. Visnu-kanci is situated about 5 miles away from Kanchipuram. It is here that Lord Varadaraja, another form of Lord Visnu, resides. There is also a big lake known as Ananta-sarovara. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu stayed at Visnu-kanci for 2 days, He danced and performed kirtana in ecstasy. When all the people saw Him, they were converted into devotees of Lord Krishna.



Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple

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Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal

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Lord Sri Varadaraja Perumal

Lord Brahma began the yajna. Like any yajna, impediments will come. Many obstacles came in Lord Brahma's execution of his yajna. First, the great river came, the massive river, massive river that was just going to wash away the entire yajyashala. Then Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and Lord Narayana appeared as Vega Sethu. The Lord appeared as a deity sleeping on Ananta-Sesa. He was like a dam that stopped the flow of the river, Meghavati River.

Then, demons created complete darkness. How do you perform yajna in complete darkness? Lord Brahma took shelter of the Lord, and the Lord Narayana appeared in another form, Deepak Prakash, and created wonderful light.



Festival at Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple

Then the demons sent a ferocious beast, Sharabha (snake) and the Lord appeared with eight arms (Ashtabhuja) and killed the demon in the form of Ashtabhuja. Then all the other demons were just gathered around, just harassing Brahma, trying to do everything possible to stop this yajna. Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared on the call of Brahma. These are self-manifesting

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Utsav deities at Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple

Brahma continued performing his yajna. At the successful conclusion of the yajna in which he prayed with pure devotion for Lord Vishnu to appear, because please understand, it is not just the ritual of the yajna that invokes the presence of the Lord. It is the feeling, the intention in which it is being offered. That is why yajnas by Brahmans who really don't care anything about you, are just doing it for money, the affect is very minimal. Brahmanas who are performing in a spirit of compassion, to help you. Who are doing it with great faith and devotion, their offerings are very pleasingly accepted by the Lord.

Lord Brahma completed his yajna, and from the fire came a magnificent Vimana. Within that Vimana, was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His beautiful four-arm form. Because He came to the world to be the king of all bestowers of blessings, His name is Varadaraja.



Yoga Nrsimhadeva at Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple

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Golden and Silver Lizards

Two disciples of Gautama Rishi used to fill water every day for their Guru. One day, to their shock, they found a lizard jumping out when they placed the tumbler in front of their Guru. An angry Rishi cursed the two for their carelessness and they instantly turned into Lizards. The two disciples stayed here at Kanchipuram as lizards until Indra came to worship Varadarajan Perumal and relieved them from their curse. In memory of this, there is a golden lizard and a silver lizard outside the Varadarajan Sannidhi.



Sripad Ramanujacarya



Hundred pillar hall at Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple

Temple has beautiful pavilions in the courtyard and a remarkable 100 pillared hall which has sculptures depicting Ramayana, episodes from Srimad-Bhagavatam and pastimes of Lord Krishna carved on many of the panels. Lord Varadharaja Swamy resides in the upper prakaram.

5. Sri Yatoktakari Perumal Temple (or Thiru Vekka)

Sri Yatoktakari Perumal is also called "*Vega Sethu*" because Lord Narayana appeared here in the form of a dam (*sethu*), upon called by Lord Brahma to stop the massive "*Vegavathi*" river sent by Saraswathi who felt ignored by Lord Brahma when he was doing the Ashwamedha *yajna*. Lord stopped the river by lying across the river on Aadhiseshan. Because of this, this Perumal is also named as "*Vega Sethu*". This Vega Sethu then became Vegavanai and then finally named as "*Vekkanai*" and finally became "*Vekka*". Sri Yatoktakari Perumal Temple is the 51st *Divya Desam* dedicated to Lord Visnu. It is 1km from Sri Varadaraja Perumal Temple. Lord Sri Yatoktakari Perumal lying in the opposite direction from right to left and is huge in size.

Tirumazhisai Azhwar and Kanikannan: When great Sri Vaishnava *acarya*, Thirumizhisai Azhwar was living in Kanchipuram, a very old lady (*dasi*) served Lord Yatoktakari Perumal in this temple. She used to clean the temple premises and selflessly served the Lord. Seeing her sincerity and self-less devotion to Lord, Thirumazhisai Azhwar blessed her to become a beautiful maiden. Later, the King of this city, wondering at the enchanting beauty of this lady and married her. On hearing the secret of an old lady becoming a beautiful woman, he was in an eager mood to meet Thirumizhisai Azhwar.

Kanikannan, who a close associate and an ardent follower of Thirumazhisai Azhwar. One day the king ordered Kanikannan to his court. King demanded Kanikannan to bring Thirumizhisai Azhwar to his palace and sing poems on praising him. On hearing this, Kanikannan authentically revealed that all poems that Thirumazhisai Azhwar sung is in praising the glories of no one other than Lord Vishnu and it is impossible for him to come to the palace and sing a poem on praising the king engaged in mundane sense gratification. The king persuaded Kanikannan with all the precious jewels, diamonds, etc., but Kanikannan flatly refused to do so. The king got angry on hearing this and ordered him to get out from Kanchipuram at once.

Kanikannan went to Thirumizhisai Azhwar and explained all about that had happened in the palace and prepared to start leaving from Kanchipuram. On seeing this, Thirumizhisai Azhwar also prepared to start from Kanchipuram leaving along with Kanikannan. Before leaving Sri Yatoktakari Perumal temple, Thirumazhisai Azhwar fervently sung beautiful verses requesting Lord to be with them on their way out of Kanchipuram. Lord Yatoktakari Perumal also decided to leave Kanchipuram at the pure devotion and love of Thirumazhisai Azhwar. Consequently, Lord Yatoktakari Perumal followed Thirumazhisai Azhwar and Kanikannan on their way out of Kanchipuram. Shortly, the king realized the absence of Lord in this temple and deeply regretted at his ignorance. He begged Kanikannan to pardon him and received Kanikannan and his Acarya with due respect and honour to Kanchipuram. Thus Sri Yathothkari Perumal was re-positioned in the sanctum sanctorum with his divine presence. And after this, Kanikannan along with Thirumizhisai Azhwar came back to Kanchipuram. When returning, Azhwar sung a song asking that Kanikannan has returned back to Kanchipuram and he want the Perumal to go and sleep in His Aadhiseshan in the temple. On hearing this, Lord Narayana came back to Sri Yatoktakari (Thiru Vekka) temple. Since the Perumal obeyed the words of Thirumizhisai Azhwar and did what he said, he is called as "*Sonna Vannam Seitha Perumal*". *Sonna Vannam Seitha* means obeying and doing the same what was told to him.



திருவெக்கா

Sri Yatoktakari Perumal

Sri Yatoktakari Perumal is also called "Vega Sethu" because Lord Narayana appeared here in the form of a dam (sethu), upon called by Lord Brahma to stop the massive "Vegavathi" river sent by Saraswathi who felt ignored by Lord Brahma when he was doing the Ashwamedha yajna. Lord stopped the river by lying across the river on Aadhiseshan. Because of this, this Perumal is also named as "Vega Sethu". This Vega Sethu then became Vegavanai and then finally named as "Vekkanai" and finally became "Vekka". When great Sri Vaishnava acarya, Thirumizhisai Azhwar was living in Kanchipuram, a very old lady (dasi) served Lord Yatoktakari Perumal in this temple. She used to clean the temple premises and selflessly served the Lord. Seeing her sincerity and self-less devotion to Lord, Thirumazhisai Azhwar blessed her to become a

beautiful maiden. Later, the King of this city, wondering at the enchanting beauty of this lady and married her. On hearing the secret of an old lady becoming a beautiful woman, he was in an eager mood to meet Thirumizhisai Azhwar.



Sri Yatoktakari Perumal

Kanikannan, who a close associate and an ardent follower of Thirumazhisai Azhwar. One day the king ordered Kanikannan to his court. King demanded Kanikannan to bring Thirumizhisai Azhwar to his palace and sing poems on praising him. On hearing this, Kanikannan authentically revealed that all poems that Thirumazhisai Azhwar sung is in praising the glories of no one other than Lord Vishnu and it is impossible for him to come to the palace and sing a poem on praising the king engaged in mundane sense gratification. The king persuaded Kanikannan with all the precious jewels, diamonds, etc., but Kanikannan flatly refused to do so. The king got angry on hearing this and ordered him to get out from Kanchipuram at once.



Sri Yathoktakari Perumal

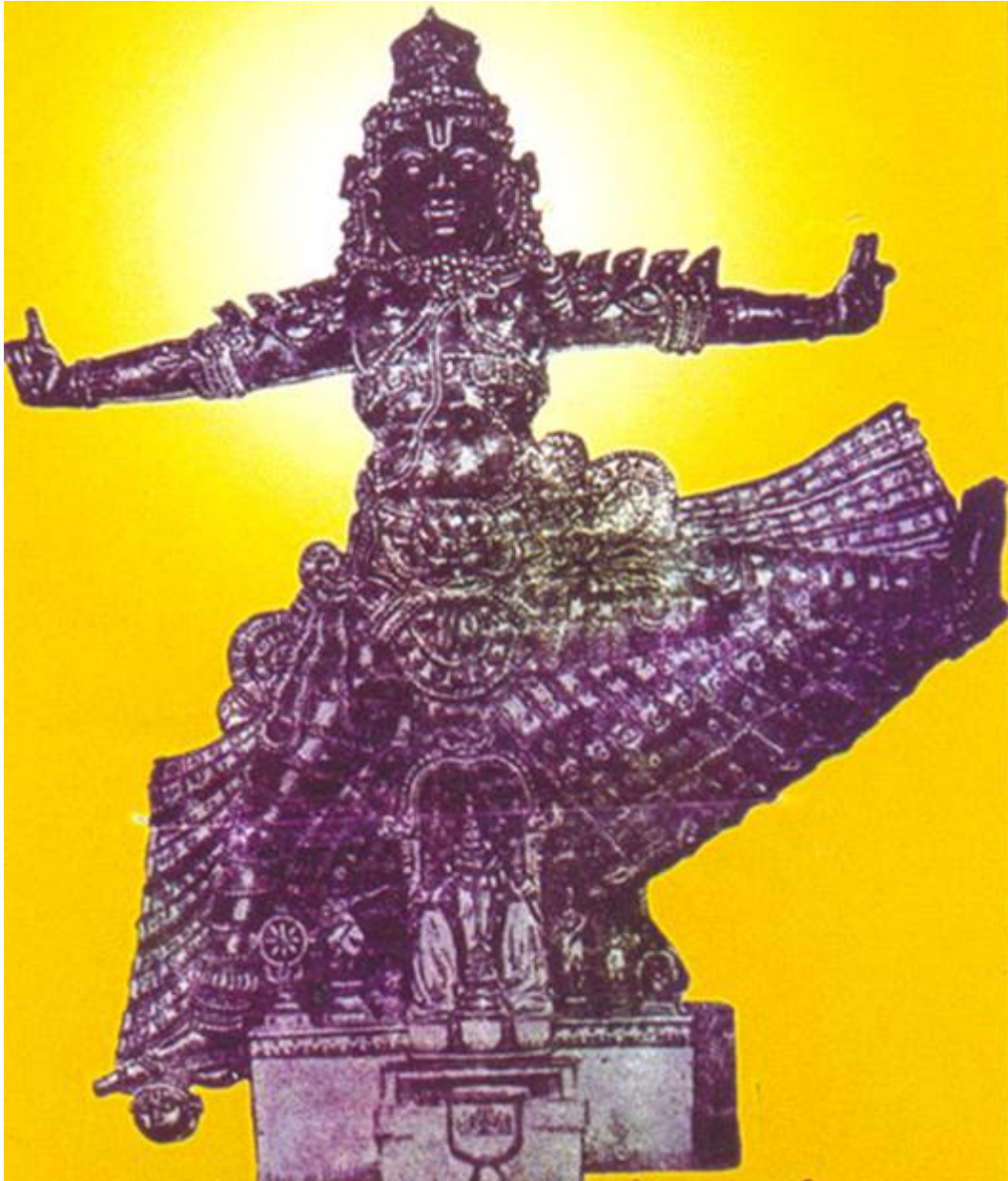
Kanikannan went to Thirumizhisai Azhwar and explained all about that had happened in the palace and prepared to start leaving from Kanchipuram. On seeing this, Thirumizhisai Azhwar also prepared to start from Kanchipuram leaving along with Kanikannan. Before leaving Sri Yathoktakari Perumal temple, Thirumazhisai Azhwar fervently sung beautiful verses requesting Lord to be with them on their way out of Kanchipuram. Lord Yathoktakari Perumal also decided to leave Kanchipuram at the pure devotion and love of Thirumazhisai Azhwar. Consequently, Lord Yathoktakari Perumal followed Thirumazhisai Azhwar and Kanikannan on their way out of Kanchipuram. Shortly, the king realized the absence of Lord in this temple and deeply regretted at his ignorance. He begged Kanikannan to pardon him and received Kanikannan and his Acarya with due respect and honour to Kanchipuram. Thus Sri Yathothkari Perumal was re-positioned in the sanctum sanctorum with his divine presence.



Sri Yathoktakari Perumal

And after this, Kanikannan along with Thirumizhisai Azhwar came back to Kanchipuram. When returning, Azhwar sung a song asking that Kanikannan has returned back to Kanchipuram and he want the Perumal to go and sleep in His Aadhiseshan in the temple. On hearing this, Lord Narayana came back to Sri Yatoktakari (Thiru Vekka) temple. Since the Perumal obeyed the words of Thirumizhisai Azhwar and did what he said, he is called as "Sonna Vannam Seitha Perumal". Sonna Vannam Seitha means obeying and doing the same what was told to him.

6. Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple (or Thiru Ooragam)



Lord Sri Ulagalantha Perumal

Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple is Lord Vamanadeva's (Trivikrama) temple. The gigantic Ulagalantha Perumal is special to Kanchipuram and a Lord of this size, and in this form, cannot be seen in any other Divya Desam. Sri Ulagalantha Perumal is over 35 feet in height. Left leg is seen lifted at a right angle (to the body), parallel to the ground. Right leg is seen placed on Bali Maharaj's head. Two fingers on Lord's left hand stretched out referring to the two steps He took to measure this world. One stretched finger on His right hand indicates the question the Lord posed to Bali as to where He could place his third step.

*chalayasi vikramane balim adbhuta-vamana
pada-nakha-nira-janita-jana-pavana
kesava dharta-vamana-rupa jaya jagadisa hare*

O Kesava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a dwarf-brahmana! All glories to You! O wonderful dwarf, by Your massive steps You deceive King Bali, and by the Ganges water that has emanated from the nails of Your lotus feet, You deliver all living beings within this world. [Sri Dasavatara-stotra, from Gita-Govinda by Srila Jayadeva Gosvami]

Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple is Lord Vamanadeva's (Trivikrama) temple. When Bali Maharaja's gave his head in charity as the place for Lord Vamana's third step, Bali Maharaja could no longer get the darshan of Lord. He prayed to the Lord for His darshan. Answering to Bali Maharaja's prayers, Lord Vamana appeared here as Ulagalantha Perumal. Lord appeared once again before Bali in a smaller form at this place as the serpent Lord Adishesha (Ooragam).

The gigantic Ulagalantha Perumal is special to Kanchipuram and a Lord of this size, and in this form, cannot be seen in any other Divya Desam. Sri Ulagalantha Perumal is over 35 feet in height. Left leg is seen lifted at a right angle (to the body), parallel to the ground. Right leg is seen placed on Bali Maharaj's head. Two fingers on Lord's left hand stretched out referring to the two steps He took to measure this world. One stretched finger on His right hand indicates the question the Lord posed to Bali as to where He could place his third step. Inside the Sri Ulagalantha Temple there are four Divya Desams namely, Thiru Karvaanam, Thiru Kaaragam, Thiru Ooragam and Thiru Neeragam.

Thiru Kkaar Vaanar Temple: Kkaar means clouds and Neer means rain or water. Lord Sri Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 9 verse 19 says, "I withhold and send forth the rain", and in Chapter 7 verse 8 says, "I am the taste of water. So, Lord Narayana explains that He Himself is the black clouds which gives the rain for everyone to survive. So, this Perumal is called as "Thirukkaar Vaanakalvar".

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 8 chapters 18 to 23 describe the wonderful pastime of Lord Vamanadeva and Bali Maharaja. <http://www.vedabase.com/sb/8/18>



Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple at Kanchipuram

Inside the Sri Ulagalantha Temple there are four Divya Desams namely, Thiru Karvaanam, Thiru Kaaragam, Thiru Ooragam and Thiru Neeragam.



Lord Vamanadeva, The Dwarf Incarnation

Once, the king of the demons, Bali Maharaja, ruled over the entire universe. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna, decided to incarnate in order to regain the universe for His devotees, the demigods. Lord appeared from the womb of Aditi in his four-armed form of Narayana. His mother and father, Aditi and Kasyapa Muni, were struck with wonder and joy. Then, standing before them, the Lord assumed the form of Vamana, the dwarf brahmana.



Sukracharya Curses Bali Maharaja

He tricked Bali Maharaja by asking for three steps of land. Sukracharya understood that Vamanadeva was actually Vishnu and he advised Bali Maharaja to not fulfill the promise of three steps of land. Bali Maharaja, however, was a devotee, and he saw the arguments of his guru as a hindrance to devotional service. Bali Maharaja did not fear the results of giving everything to the Supreme Lord. When he told Sukracharya that he could not go back on a promise made to a brahmana, Sukracharya cursed him, saying "Because of disobeying me, you shall very soon be bereft of all your opulence."



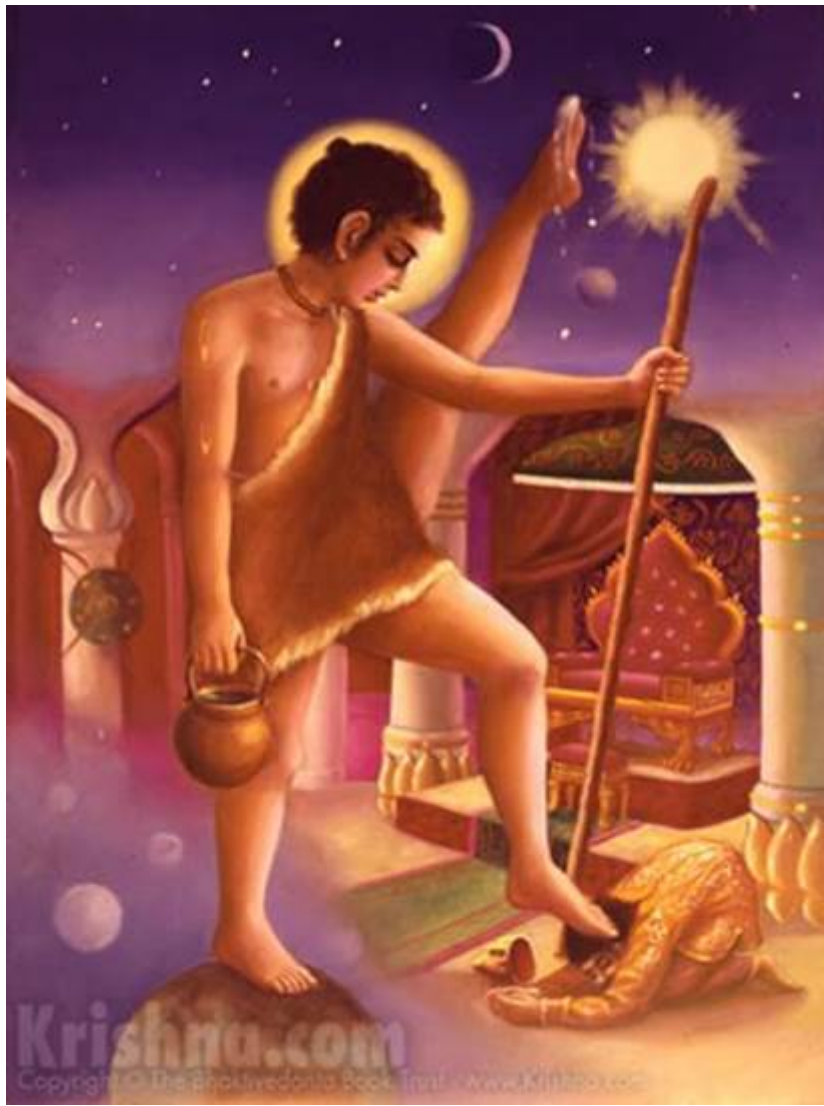
Lord Vamana Envelopes the Universe

Bali Maharaja, the king of the demons, even after understanding that Vamanadeva was an incarnation of Vishnu, did not go back on his word. He offered Vamanadeva water and then offered Him the gift of three steps of land, which he had promised. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who had assumed the form of Vamana, the brahmana boy, began increasing in size, acting in terms of the material energy, until everything in the universe was within His body, including the earth, the planetary systems, the sky, the directions, the various holes in the universe, the seas, the oceans, the birds, beasts, human beings, the demigods and the great saintly persons. With His first step He covered the entire surface of the earth; and with His second step He covered the heavenly planets. There was no place left for Him to take His third step.



Bali Maharaja Lowers His Head in Shame in Front of Lord Vamana

Vamanadeva said, "O King of the demons, you have promised to give Me three steps of land, but I have occupied the entire universe with two steps. Now think about where I should put My third." Garuda understood the desire of the Supreme Lord, and he therefore arrested Bali Maharaja with the ropes of Varuna and brought him before Vamanadeva. Bali Maharaja was fixed in his determination to satisfy Vamanadeva. Therefore when Vamanadeva spoke of how He had covered all the planetary systems with His first two steps and Bali's promise of three steps of land was therefore unfulfilled.



Vamanadeva Places His Third Step on Bali's Head

Bali Maharaja, fixed in his determination, would not allow his promise to be false. He asked the Lord to please place His third lotus footstep on his head, who thus surrendered everything to the Lord.



Lord Sri Krishna is the fountainhead of all incarnations, and He is therefore the cause of all causes.

[Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1 , chapter 1, verse 17]



Thiru Oorgam (Kanchi) - Ooragathan

Thiru Oorgam

Lord appeared once again before Bali in a smaller form at this place as the serpent Lord Adishesha (Ooragam).



Thiru Karvanam (Kanchi) - Kalvar

Thiru Karvanam

Kkaar means clouds and Neer means rain or water. Lord Sri Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 9 verse 19 says, "I withhold and send forth the rain", and in Chapter 7 verse 8 says, "I am the taste of water. So, Lord Narayana explains that He Himself is the black clouds which gives the rain for everyone to survive. So, this Perumal is called as "Thirukkaar Vaanakkalvar".



Thiruneeragam (Kanchi) - Jagadeesa Perumal

Thiru Neeragam



Utsava deities at Sri Ulagalantha Perumal Temple

7. Sri Vaikunda Perumal Temple (or Thiru Parameshwara Vinnagaram)

Sri Vaikunda Perumal Temple is the 56th *Divya Desam* dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The region where the temple is located was called *Vidarbha desa* and ruled by a king named Viroacha. Due to his misdeeds in preceding birth, Virocha had no heir. He prayed to Lord Siva at *Sri Kailasanathar temple*. The presiding deity of the temple gave a boon that the *Dvarapalas* (the gatekeepers) of the Vishnu temple will be born as sons to him. The two princes, Pallavan and Vallavan, bring the servants to Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha, were deeply devoted to Lord Vishnu and conducted big *yajnas* to Lord Vishnu for the welfare of the people of their kingdom. Pleased by their devotion, Lord Vishnu granted *darshan* as *Vaikundanatha Perumal* to the princes here.

Sri Vaikunda Perumal temple is built in Dravidian architectural style. Temple has three-tier sanctorum's (*prakara*), one on top of the other. At the ground floor sanctum is the primary deity of Lord Vishnu known as *Sri Paramapadha Nathan*, in a seated posture. Lord Vishnu deity, called *Lord Ranganatha* on the first floor sanctum is in the sleeping posture (*sayana kolam*) with His consorts *Sri Devi* and *Bhu Devi*, and on the topmost floor, is *Sri Paramapadanathan*, the standing posture of this deity. The temple dates back to 1300 years and is beautifully constructed. The walls of the temples are adorned with historical and religious sculptures some describing the rule of the Pallava dynasty.

The *Vaikasi Brahmotsavam*, celebrated during the Tamil month of *Vaikasi* (May-June), and *Vaikuntha Ekadasi* celebrated during the Tamil month of *Margazhi* (Dec-Jan) are the two major festivals celebrated in the temple. About 3 lakh people visit this temple during *Vaikuntha Ekadasi* festival. This temple is revered in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, the 7th-9th century Vaishnava canon by *Thirumangai Azhwar* in 10 hymns. These verses are recited by a group of temple priests amidst music with *nagaswaram* (pipe instrument) and *tavil* (percussion instrument) at the temple. The temple is also called *Mummada Koil*. There was a secret underground tunnel laid out from this temple all the

way to Mahabalipuram, on the eastern sea shore, as well as to Parameswara Pallava's court.



Sri Vaikunda Perumal Temple

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Sri Vaikunda Perumal (utsav deities)



Lord Sri Vaikunda Perumal



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Sri Vaikunda Perumal temple

8. Sri Pandava Dhootha Perumal Temple (or Thiru Paadagam)

Sri Pandava Dhootha Perumal Temple is the 49th among 108 *Divya Desams* of Lord Vishnu. The presiding deity of the temple *Sri Pandava Dhootha* is in a huge form called *Vishwaroopam* of Lord Krishna. The awe-inspiring, gigantic 25 feet deity of Lord Krishna as *Visva-rupa* (*Universal form*) is in sitting posture facing east. Temple is associated with pastime when Lord Sri Krishna went to the Kauravas as an emissary (called *Thoota* locally) of the Pandavas to make a peace treaty to avoid warfare. Duryodhana, the king of the Kauravas, had a plan to arrest and kill Krishna while He was in Hastinapura. He dug a deep pit and covered it with a carpet and a chair studded with gems. He had wrestlers hidden in the pit to wrangle Krishna. Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, displayed His *Vishvarupa*, the *Universal form*, a giant form to all the courtment. Dhritarashtra, the blind king and father of Duryodana could also see this form.

After hearing this pastime from the sage Vaisampayana, *King Janamajeya*, the great-grandson of *Arjuna*, did penance here to have *darshan* of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna appeared in His divine form *Visva-rupa* and blessed *Janamajeya* at this temple. Sri Krishna at this temple is called *Padagam*. *Pada* means big and *Agam* means residence, signifying *Thirupadagam* as the place where Vishnu resides with his giant form.

The temple is considered one of three oldest Vishnu temples in Kanchipuram, the other two being *Ulagalantha Perumal Temple* and *Yathothkari Perumal Temple*. The central shrine of the temple has a large image of the presiding deity *Pandava Thoothar*, which has a height of 25 ft (7.6 m). Such a large deity of Lord Krishna is one of its kind. The deity is seen seated in *Arda Padmasana* posture with his right leg bent to the basement. The right palm depicts the *Abhaya Mudra* for protection and the left arm depicts *Varada Mudra* for giving boon. The shrine faces east and the *vimana* of the temple is called *Bhadra Vimana*. The preceding hall to the main sanctum, *Mukha Mandapa*, has bronze images of the festival deities of the temple and *Azhwars*. The most prominent of them is of *Arulala Permula Emburamanar*, the disciple of Ramanuja, whose image is rarely found in other Vishnu temples. The shrine of *Rukmini* is located to the south of the main shrine and has the deity of *Rukmini*. Deity of *Lord Nrsimhadeva* is located behind the main shrine. *Matsya Theertham*, the temple tank, is located on the north-eastern side of the temple. The major festival of the temple is *Sri Krishna Janmastami*.

Another interesting story associated with this temple priests. A learned scholar, *Arulala Permula Emburamanar* (also called Yanjamurthy) from Vinjamur in Nellore district came to Kanchipuram and engaged in a debate with Sripad Ramanuja for 17 days and became his disciple after losing the debate. The disciple and his family started serving *Pandava Dhootha* here in this temple. The temple is revered in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, the 7th–9th century Vaishnava canon, by Peyalvar, Bhoothathazhwar, Thirumazhisai Aazhwar and Thirumangai Azhwar. The Azhwars have sung praise on the different forms of Pandava Dhoothar.



Sri Pandava Dhootha Perumal Temple

The presiding deity of the temple Sri Pandava Dhootha is in a huge form called Vishwaroopam of Lord Krishna. The awe-inspiring, gigantic 25 feet deity of Lord Krishna as Visva-rupa (Universal form) is in sitting posture facing east. Temple is associated with pastime when Lord Sri Krishna went to the Kauravas as an emissary (called Thoota locally) of the Pandavas to make a peace treaty to avoid warfare. Duryodhana, the king of the Kauravas, had a plan to arrest and kill Krishna while He was in Hastinapura. He dug a deep pit and covered it with a carpet and a chair studded with gems. He had wrestlers hidden in the pit to wrangle Krishna. Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, displayed His Vishvarupa, the Universal form, a giant form to all the courtment. Dhritarashtra, the blind king and father of Duryodana could also see this form.



Lord Sri Pandava Dhootha Perumal

The deity is seen seated in *Arda Padmasana* posture with his right leg bent to the basement. The right palm depicts the *Abhaya Mudra* for protection and the left arm depicts *Varada Mudra* for giving boon.

After hearing this pastime from the Sage Vaisampayana, King Janamajeya, the great-grandson of Arjuna, did penance here to have *darshan* of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna appeared in His divine form *Visva-rupa* and blessed Janamajeya at this temple. Sri Krishna at this temple is called Padagam. *Pada* means big and *Agam* means residence, signifying *Thirupadagam* as the place where Vishnu resides with his giant form.



Sri Pandava Dhootha Perumal Temple

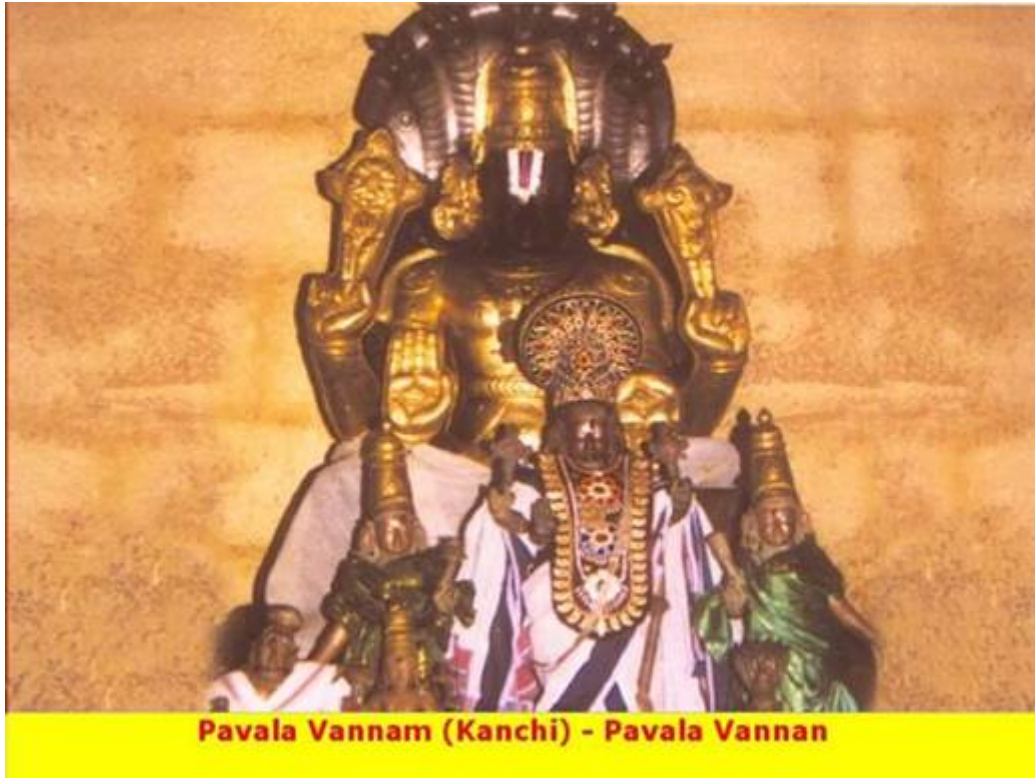
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9. Sri Pachai Vannar Temple and Sri Pavalai Vannar Temple (or Thiru Pavala Vannan)

In Kanchipuram, stands the two temples of *Pachai Vannar* and *Pavalai Vannar*, two shrines standing opposite to each other, two places where the Lord is mentioned by His colour. He is seen in *emerald green* at the *Pachai Vannar* and *coral* coloured at the *Pavalai Vannar*. The temple of Pavalai Vannar was praised in the hymns of the Azhwar saints as the 108 sacred abodes of Vishnu. Sri Pachai Vannar Temple is the 54th among 108 *Divya Desams* of Lord Vishnu. Here Vishnu is worshipped as Sri Pavala Vannar Perumal with his consort Pavalavalli Thayar. Lord Pavala Vannan Perumal is in standing posture facing west. There is another shrine opposite this *sannadhi* about ½ km away called *Pacchai Vannar Sannadhi*. Lord Pachai Vannan Perumal is seated on divine serpent *Adishesha*. *The two sannadhis together are considered as one divyadesam*. It is said that both the Pacchai and Pavala Vannan perumal has to be worshipped, without leaving any one of them. Pavala Vannam Temple was once visited by three *Azhwars*, the great saints in Vaishnavite tradition, namely Peyalvar, Thirumalisai Azhwar and Thirumangai Azhwar. These three *Azhwars* among the twelve sang devotional songs on various forms of Vishnu. Besides, many eminent Acharyas have also penned down famous devotional songs for pleasure of Lord Vishnu. The temple faces the western direction.

Lord Vishnu appears green as emerald, hence praised as Pachai Vanna Perumal - Pachai Vannam-emerald green. As He granted *darshan* to sage Marichi alone, Mothers are not with Him in the sanctum sanctorum. He granted *darshan* as Lord Ramacandra to the Rishi, hence worshipped as Lord Rama and Mother as Sita. Just opposite here is the

Pavala Vanna Nathar temple, (red as a coral) one of the 108 Divya Desas. Worshipping Perumals – Pachai Vanna Nathar and Pavala Vanna Nathar is a rare darshan opportunity for the devotees. Mother *Mahalakshmi* blesses the devotees from a separate shrine. Generally *Sri Chakra* is installed in temples either opposite Mother's shrine or nearby. Here, *Sri Chakra* is installed in the shrine itself. Mother blesses Her devotees in three forms, *Sri Chakra Rupini*, *Mahalakshmi* and *Sita*.



Lord Pavala Vannam Perumal

In Kanchipuram, stands the two temples of *Pachai Vannar* and *Pavalai Vannar*, two shrines standing opposite to each other, two places where the Lord is mentioned by His colour. He is seen in *emerald green* at the *Pachai Vannar* and *coral* coloured at the *Pavalai Vannar*. The temple of *Pavalai Vannar* was praised in the hymns of the Azhwar saints as the 108 sacred abodes of Vishnu. *Sri Pachai Vannar Temple* is the 54th among 108 *Divya Desams* of Lord Vishnu. Here Vishnu is worshipped as *Sri Pavala Vannan Perumal* with his consort *Pavalavalli Thayar*. Lord *Pavala Vannan Perumal* is in standing posture facing west. There is another shrine opposite this *sannadhi* about ½ km away called *Pacchai Vannar Sannadhi*. Lord *Pachai Vannan Perumal* is seated on divine serpent *Adiseshan*. The two *sannadhis* together are considered as one *divyadesam*.

10. Sri Ekambaranathar Temple and Sri Nilathingal Thundathan Perumal Temple (or Thiru Nilathingal Thundam)

Sri Ekambaranathar Temple (or "Lord of Mango Tree") is the largest temple of Kanchipuram. *Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta Madhya lila* 9.68 mentions, *Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu* visited this temple during His tour to South India - "Arriving at Siva-kanci, *Caitanya Mahaprabhu* visited the deity of Lord Siva. By His influence, He converted all the devotees of Lord Siva into Vaisnavas." *Thiru Nilathingal Thundam* is one of the 108 *Divya Desams* of Lord Vishnu situated in *Sri Ekambaranathar temple*. The shrine is in the north-east corner of the temple.

Pastime:

Vishnu helps Parvathi in her Penance: When Mother Parvathi was doing *tapasa* (penance) beneath a mango tree, Lord Siva wanted to test the strength of her *tapasa*. So, he fired the Mango tree. At that time, Parvathi seek the help of Vaamanar. After hearing the request of Parvathi, Sri Vaamanar with four hands with *Sanga* (conch) in one hand and *Chakra* (disc) on the other, took out the *Chandran* (Moon) from the head of Lord Siva and with the cool rays out of it Lord Vishnu made the fire cool and made the Mango tree grow once again. After this, Parvathi went back to do the *tapasa*. But, Lord Siva wanted once again to test her and sent *Ganga*, the river. When *Ganga* came very fast to destroy the *tapasa* of Parvathi, Parvathi explained her that both of them are sisters. In spite of hearing this, Ganga River didn't want to stop and tried to destroy her and her *tapasa*. At that time, Parvathi made a Siva *lingam* out of sand and elapsed the Linga with all veneration and embraced it, so as the Linga could not wash away by the water of *Ganga*. Siva was pleased and took her back as his consort. This is the *Sthala Puranam* of this temple. Lord Siva is worshipped in the form of *Earth Linga* (made out of river sand). The temple tower (*Gopura*) is 11 storey structure adorned with excellent sculptures. This is one of the tallest temple in South India. There is a *Linga* in the *prakaram* of this tree which is a composite of 108 *Lingas* and another one of 1008 small *Lingas*.

Since, to help Parvathi, Lord Narayana took the *Chandran* (Moon) from Lord Siva's head to prevent the *Lingam* done by sand from Ganga river, the Perumal is called as "*Nila Thingal Thundathan*" and so the *sthalam* is called as "Thiru Nilathingal Thundam". This Divya desam is found inside Ekambareswarar temple. Since, this temple is taken care by Siva Acaryas; the poojas for Sri Vishnu is done by a Sivachariyar only. *There is a Mango tree in the temple dating back to 3,500 years. The divine tree with its four branches representing the four Vedas yields fruits in four flavours - sweet, citric, spicy and bitter. Procession deity Lord Ekambareswara is in a separate shrine of glass under the Rudraksha Pandal-tent, the roof with 5008 Rudrakshas.*

Thiru Nilaaththingal Thundathan Temple: There is a small shrine for Vishnu named *Thiru Nilaaththingal Thundathan* inside the temple complex. Vishnu is prayed as *Vamana Murthy* and the shrine is hailed by the Azhwar saints as one of the 108 Divya Desams. The presiding deity of this Lord Vishnu's temple is '*Lord Nilathingal Thundathan*', also known as *Lord Chandra Chooda Perumal*, in a standing posture, facing towards the west. His consort Mahalakshmi is named as *Ner Oruvar Illavalli Nachiyar* and also called as *Nilathingal Thunda Thaayar*. Sri Nilathingal Thundathan Perumal Temple is the only temple of Lord Vishnu where the *poojas* are done by the Saivite priests. The *Pushkarani* (temple tank) of Sri Nilathingal Thundathan Perumal Temple is called as *Chandra Pushkarani*. The temple is glorified in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, the great canon, and the devotional songs were sung by the saint *Thiru Mangai Azhwar*. The *Vimanam* (tower above the sanctum sanctorum) of Sri Nilathingal Thundathan Perumal Temple is called as *Purusha suktha Vimanam*.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana) Canto 12, chapter 13, verse 16 describes:

*nimna-ganam yatha ganga devanam acyuto yatha
vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh purananam idam tatha*

Translation:

*Just as the Ganga is the greatest of all rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among deities
and Lord Sambhu [Siva] the greatest of Vaisnavas, so Srimad-Bhagavatam is the
greatest of all Puranas.*

Lord Siva is the greatest devotee of Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna (*vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh*). Lord Siva is one of the twelve *mahajanas* as described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 6, chapter 3, verses 20-21*.

*svayambhur naradah sambhuh kumarah kapilo manuh
prahlado janako bhismo balir vaiyasakir vayam
dvadasaite vijanimo dharmam bhagavatam bhatah
guhyam visuddham durbodham yam jnatvamrtam asnute*

Translation:

Lord Brahma, Bhagavan Narada, Lord Siva, the four Kumaras, Lord Kapila [the son of Devahuti], Svayambhuva Manu, Prahlada Maharaja, Janaka Maharaja, Grandfather Bhisma, Bali Maharaja, Sukadeva Gosvami and I myself know the real religious principle. My dear servants, this transcendental religious principle, which is known as bhagavata-dharma, or surrender unto the Supreme Lord and love for Him, is uncontaminated by the material modes of nature. It is very confidential and difficult for ordinary human beings to understand, but if by chance one fortunately understands it, he is immediately liberated, and thus he returns home, back to Godhead.



Sri Ekambaranathar Temple

Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta Madhya lila 9.68 mentions, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited this temple during His tour to South India - "Arriving at Siva-kanci, Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited the deity of Lord Siva. By His influence, He converted all the devotees of Lord Siva into Vaisnavas." Thiru Nilathingal Thundam is one of the 108 Divya Desams of Lord Vishnu situated in Sri Ekambaranathar temple. The shrine is in the north-east corner of the temple.



Mango tree

When Mother Parvathi was doing tapasa (penance) beneath a mango tree, Lord Siva wanted to test the strength of her tapasa. So, he fired the Mango tree. At that time, Parvathi seek the help of Vaamanar. After hearing the request of Parvathi, Sri Vaamanar with four hands with Sanga (conch) in one hand and Chakra (disc) on the other, took out the Chandran (Moon) from the head of Lord Siva and with the cool rays out of it Lord Vishnu made the fire cool and made the Mango tree grow once again. After this, Parvathi went back to do the tapasa. But, Lord Siva wanted once again to test her and sent Ganga, the river.

When Ganga came very fast to destroy the tapasa of Parvathi, Parvathi explained her that both of them are sisters. In spite of hearing this, Ganga River didn't want to stop and tried to destroy her and her tapasa. At that time, Parvathi made a Siva lingam out of sand and elapsd the Linga with all veneration and embraced it, so as the Linga could not wash away by the water of Ganga. Siva was pleased and took her back as his consort.



Since, to help Parvathi, Lord Narayana took the Chandran (Moon) from Lord Siva's head to prevent the Lingam done by sand from Ganga river, the Perumal is called as "Nila Thingal Thundathan" and so the sthalam is called as "Thiru

Nilathingal Thundam". This Divya desam is found inside Ekambareswarar temple. Since, this temple is taken care by Siva Acaryas; the poojas for Sri Vishnu is done by a Sivachariyar only. There is a Mango tree in the temple dating back to 3,500 years. The divine tree with its four branches representing the four Vedas yields fruits in four flavours - sweet, citric, spicy and bitter. Lord Siva is worshipped in the form of Earth Linga (made out of river sand).



Sri Ekambaranathar

Srimad-Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana) Canto 12, chapter 13, verse 16 states:

*nimna-ganam yatha ganga devanam acyuto yatha
vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh purananam idam tatha*

Translation:

Just as the Ganga is the greatest of all rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among deities and Lord Sambhu [Siva] the greatest of Vaisnavas, so Srimad-Bhagavatam is the greatest of all Puranas.

Lord Siva is the greatest devotee of Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna (*vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh*). Lord Siva is one of the twelve mahajanas as described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 6, chapter 3, verses 20-21.

*svayambhur naradah sambhuh kumarah kapilo manuh
prahlado janako bhismo balir vaiyasakir vayam
dvadasaite vijanimo dharmam bhagavatam bhatah
guhyam visuddham durbodham yam jnatvamrtam asnute*

Translation:

Lord Brahma, Bhagavan Narada, Lord Siva, the four Kumaras, Lord Kapila [the son of Devahuti], Svayambhuva Manu, Prahlada Maharaja, Janaka Maharaja, Grandfather Bhisma, Bali Maharaja, Sukadeva Gosvami and I myself know the real religious principle. My dear servants, this transcendental religious principle, which is known as bhagavata-dharma, or surrender unto the Supreme Lord and love for Him, is uncontaminated by the material modes of nature. It is very confidential and difficult for ordinary human beings to understand, but if by chance one fortunately understands it, he is immediately liberated, and thus he returns home, back to Godhead.



Thiru Nilaaththingal Thundathan Temple

There is a small shrine for Vishnu named *Thiru Nilaaththingal Thundathan* inside the temple complex. Vishnu is prayed as *Vamana Murthy* and the shrine is hailed by the Azhwar saints as one of the 108 Divya Desams. The presiding deity of this Lord Vishnu's temple is '*Lord Nilathingal Thundathan*', also known as *Lord Chandra Chooda Perumal*, in a standing posture, facing towards the west. His consort Mahalakshmi is named as *Ner Oruvar Illavalli Nachiyar* and also called as *Nilathingal Thunda Thaayar*.



Sri Ekambaranathar temple's magnificent hall



The temple tower (Gopura) is 11 storey structure adorned with excellent sculptures. This is one of the tallest temple in South India.

11. Sri Kamakshi Amman Temple and Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal Temple (or Thirukkalvanoor)

Sri Kamakshi Amman Temple: Sri Kamakshi Amman Temple is a famous temple dedicated to goddess Kamakshi or Parvati. This is one of the three holy places of Shakti worship (*Shakti Peeta*), the others being Meenakshi temple at Madurai and Visalakshi temple in Varanasi. The deity is recognised as having Saraswati and Maha Lakshmi in her two eyes. Kamakshi sits at the centre of the *Gayathri Mandapa*, which has 5 steps representing *Panchakshri Mantra* of Lord Siva and 24 pillars signifying the 24 letters of the sacred *Gayathri Mantra*. She holds a sugarcane bow and bunch of flowers in the lower two of her arms and has a *pasha* (lasso), an *ankusha* (goad) in her upper two arms. There is also a parrot perched near the flower bunch.

Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal Temple (or Thirukkalvanoor): Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal Temple is located inside the temple complex of Kanchi Kamakshi Amman temple and also revered as one of the 108 *Divya Desam* temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal temple is glorified in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, a Vaishnava canon, and Mangalasasanam (devotional songs) were sung by the 12 Azhwar saints. The presiding deity Lord Aadhi Varaha Perumal (Lord Vishnu), is in a standing posture facing west direction. Other deities of this temple are Garuda and Anjaneyar. The *Pushkarani* (temple tank) of Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal temple is called as *Nithiya Pushkarani* and *Vimanam* (tower above the sanctum sanctorum) of this temple is called as *Vaamana vimanam*.

Pastimes:

Story behind the name Thirukkalvanoor: The legend says that when Goddess Kamakshi, one of the forms of Goddess Parvati, and Goddess Lakshmi were taking bath in Kama Koshtam pond, Lord Narayana was said to be hiding behind a pillar and hearing on what they were speaking about. Goddess Kamakshi found that Lord Narayana is hearing to them by hiding Himself. As a result, Goddess Kamakshi gave him a playful punishment by making Him stand, then sit and finally to reside down. Because of this, Lord Narayana is found in all the three sevas i.e. Nindra, Irundha and Kidantha Seva on the North side of the pond of this temple. And hence near to the temple tank the images of Lord Vishnu in the *standing posture* (*Nindra Kolam*), *sitting posture* (*Irundha Kolam*)

and sleeping posture (*Kidantha Kolam*) are traceable. Since, Lord Narayana saw them taking bath without knowing them, Parvathi kept Him the name as "Kalvan" and this Divyadesam is called as "*Thirukkalvanoor*".

Parvathi penance on Lord Vamanadeva: As per *Purana*, Lord Siva cursed Parvati due to some differences of opinion, and Parvati prayed and meditated on Lord Vamanadeva at this place standing on one foot. Parvati, absolved of the curse was named Kamakshi.



Sri Kamakshi Amman

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Lord Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal

Sri Aadhi Varaha Perumal Temple is located inside the temple complex of Kanchi Kamakshi Amman temple and also revered as one of the 108 *Divya Desam* temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

12. Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal Temple (or Thiruputkuzhi)

Lord Ramacandra performed the funeral of Jatayu here

Sri Vijaya Raghava Perumal Temple is the place where Lord Ramacandra performed the last rites for Jatayu the vulture, who fought with Ravana to rescue Sita from him and sacrificed his life in the service of the Lord. As a mark of honour to Jatayu, the flag post and the Balipeeta are outside the temple. Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal Temple is 12 km west of Kanchipuram. The main deity Lord Vijaya Raghava Perumal blesses the devotees in a sitting posture holding Jatayu on His thigh, to mark the importance of Jatayu's devotion. The *Pushkarani* (temple tank) of Vijaya Raghava Perumal temple is called as *Jatayu Pushkarani*. The *Vimanam* (the tower above the sanctum sanctorum) of Vijaya Raghava Perumal temple is called as *Vijaya Koti vimanam*. On certain festive occasions, Lord Vijaya Raghavan goes on street processions mounted on his 'Horse *Vahanam*'. There is a separate *sannidhi* for Jataayu opposite the temple tank. On all festive occasions, Lord first visits the Jataayu *sannidhi* (altar) during his street procession. The temple has been revered as *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, a Vaishnava canon, and hymns were sung by *Thirumangai Azhwar*, the saint of south India. Sundara Pandyan, the Pandya King, was one of the earliest rulers to have renovated this temple. While the temple currently comes under the endowment board, it is completely run by the Maragathavalli Trust (MSVRP Trust), which has done a commendable job in recent years in maintenance of this temple. Ramanujacarya had his initial lessons from Yadavprakasa here.

Jatayu Moksham: Lord Ramacandra left all of His properties in Ayodhya and went to the forest as ordered by His father, Dasharatha. While in the forest, Sita spotted a golden deer and requests Rama to catch it for her. The deer however was a demon Maricha sent by Ravana to lure Rama and Lakshmana, so that he could carry away Sita. With Rama and Lakshmana out in search of the deer, Ravana abducted Sita and took her along with him to Lanka. On the way to Lanka, Jatayu the vulture stopped Ravana and fought with him to release Sita, but Ravana cut Jatayu's wings and he fell down to

the earth. When Rama and Lakshmana went in search of Sita, They found Jatayu mortally wounded in the forest. Jatayu narrated the events to Rama before breathing his last. Sri Rama then performed the last rites for Jatayu. Jatayu belongs to the *Pul* (a separate family of eagle) family and was buried in a *pit* (Tamil *kuzhi*), hence this *sthalam* is called Thiruputkuzhi. Jatayu was friend of King Dasharatha. Since Lord Ramacandra was not able to perform the last rites for His father as He was away in exile, Lord derived some consolation by performing His obsequies and giving *moksham* to Jatayu.



Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal Temple (or Thiruputkuzhi)

Sri Vijaya Raghava Perumal Temple is the place where Lord Ramacandra performed the last rites for Jatayu the vulture, who fought with Ravana to rescue Sita from him and sacrificed his life in the service of the Lord. As a mark of honour to Jatayu, the flag post and the Balipeeta are outside the temple. Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal Temple is 12 km from Kanchipuram.



Lord Sri Vijayaraghava Perumal (utsava deities)

Lord Vijaya Raghava Perumal blesses the devotees in a sitting posture holding Jatayu on His thigh, to mark the importance of Jatayu's devotion. The

Pushkarani (temple tank) of Vijaya Raghava Perumal temple is called as *Jatayu Pushkarani*.

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Jatayu

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13. Sriperumbudur

Birthplace of Sripad Ramanujacarya

Sriperumbudur is the birthplace of great Vaishnava *acarya* Sripad Ramanujacarya. It is midway between Kanchipuram (32 km) and Chennai on the Chennai-Bangalore Highway (NH 4). On the way to Kanchipuram a huge arch can be seen with an inscription 'Bhagavat Ramanujar Avatharitha Sriperumbudur', birthplace of Srimad Ramanuja, the great philosopher of Vaishnavism. This leads to the temple *Sriperumbudur Adi Kesava Temple*, also called *Ramanujar Temple*. Sripad Ramanujacarya appeared in 1017 AD in Sriperumbudur to Kesava Somayaji and Gandhimathi couple. The elder uncle of the child, Sri Tirumalai Nambi, was serving in Tirupati temple. As the child looked like Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Ramacandra, he named the child *Ilaya*. 'Ilaya' means younger. *Anujan* means younger brother. As he is attributed to Sri Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Rama, he was named Ramanuja - meaning the younger brother of Lord Rama. Sri Ramanuja is also praised as *Yathiraja*. 'Yathi' means ascetic and '*raja*' stands for leadership.

Pastime: The *Bhoodha Ganas* - an army-like division of Lord Siva's empire - approached Lord Vishnu for relief from a curse spelt on them by Lord Siva. Lord Vishnu created a spring here through a serpent named Anantha (*Ananthasaras thirtham*), gave darshan to the Bhoodas from its bank and relieved them from the curse. As a token of gratitude, the *Bhoodha Ganas* set up this temple for Lord Vishnu. Hence, the place is called Bhoodhapuri. The Lord is Sri Adikesava Perumal.

There is a *mandap* in front of the temple where Sri Ramanuja was born. During the 10 day *Chithirai* festival in April-May, Acharya graces from this mandap. On His birth star day, he is placed in a cradle as a child and fed with milk in a conch. During this festival, the *Parivattam* - a turban linen - is brought from 36 Vaishnava shrines (Divya Desas) as a courtesy to the Acharya.



Sriperumbudur is the birthplace of great Vaishnava acarya Sripad Ramanujacharya.

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Mandap where Sripad Ramanujacarya appeared

Sripad Ramanujacarya appeared in 1017 AD in Sriperumbudur to Kesava Somayaji and Gandhimathi couple. The elder uncle of the child, Sri Tirumalai Nambi, was serving in Tirupati temple. As the child looked like Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Ramacandra, he named the child *Ilaya*. 'Ilaya' means younger. *Anujan* means younger brother. As he is attributed to Sri Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Rama, he was named Ramanuja - meaning the younger brother of Lord Rama. Sri Ramanuja is also praised as *Yathiraja*. 'Yathi' means ascetic and 'raja' stands for leadership.



Lord Sri Adikesava Perumal at Sriperumbudur

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Sripad Ramanujacarya

14. Sri Koorathazhwan Adikesava Perumal Temple at Kooram Birthplace of Sri Koorathazhwar

Kooram is a tiny picturesque hamlet near about 10 km from Kanchipuram. Kooram is the birthplace of great devotee Sri Koorathalwar (or Kuresh) and there is a temple dedicated to him. Kuresh appeared in 1008 A.D. and was the prime disciple of Sripad Ramanujacarya. He is an epitome of humbleness and person with unmatched guru *bhakti*. Although born into a rich family, he gave away all his material wealth and became a disciple of Sri Ramanuja. He lost his eyes in an act to protect his guru Ramanuja from the fanatics. He helped Ramanuja compose the *Sri Bhasyam*.

In Kooram there is Kooram Koorathazhwar Temple. This temple has two parts one dedicated to Sri Adi Kesava Perumal and the second part dedicated to Koorathalwar. The temple dedicated to Koorathalwar was the place where his residence was located around 1000 years ago. The first part of the temple is the main portion, it faces the eastern direction. The sanctum sanctorum has the deities of Sri Adi Kesava Perumal with His consorts Sri Devi and Bhu Devi. All the Deities are in the standing posture. There are the sub shrine of Garuda, flag post and Balipeetham facing the sanctum. The sanctum has just one *prakara* (corridor). The *prakara* has the sub shrines of the Pankajambal, Andal, and Chakarathalwar with Lord Nrsimhadeva on his back and Hanuman. The sub shrine of Desikan is found separately at the exterior side of the temple. A small deity of

Hanuman is also located here. The second part of the temple belongs to Koorathalwar. The sanctum sanctorum has the deity of Koorathalwar in the sitting posture. The prakara surrounding the sanctum has a lot of paintings depicting his life. The bronze Utsava deities of Lord Ramacandra, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman, are around 1000 years old and were worshiped by the parents of Koorathalwar, are also placed along with his deity in the sanctum sanctorum. The room where Koorathazhwar was born is converted into his shrine. This portion of the temple has many sub shrines such as Pillai Lokacharya, Manavala Mamunigal, Ramanujar, Parasara Pattar, Senai Mudali, Nammalvar and Tirumangai Azhwar. Although the temple is ancient, it is entirely renovated and it is hard to find any heritage sign.

Kolatunga's atrocities and Kuresa defeats the king's ministers:

There was a king of the Chola dynasty name Kolatunga who was a fanatic. We find throughout religious history this type of fanaticism blemishes the good name of God consciousness.

Spirituality is to make us humble, forgiving and at the same time very strict and very serious about practicing our own faith and feeling compassion for all living beings. There cannot be hate in the heart of one who loves God. Basically religious fanaticism is not about God or religion, it's about the false ego or the ahankar. Ahankar has a very powerful tool to fulfill itself in the form of so called religion. Because then we can bring it to absolute dimensions that justifies in doing anything to anyone, anywhere at any time. It is the feast for the ego.

Kolatunga was a Saivaite and he wanted to convert everyone. He had a minister called Chaturgrama. He was a disciple of Kuresa and an associate of Ramanuja. But somehow because of too much false ego he became bitter, antagonistic. Chaturgrama suggested Kolatunga that if he wanted the kingdom to convert to his religion, then, either he will have to convert Ramanujacarya or kill him. So the king sent military to Sri Rangam to invite Ramanujacarya to come to Kanchipuram for a debate. When the soldiers came Ramanujacarya was bathing in the river. He was collecting everything and was ready to go. There was a disciple of Ramanuja, his name was Kuresa (also known as Koorathazhwan and Kuresan). He was a very, very devoted disciple, he was so pure and so simple and so humble but yet so learned in his philosophy. He told Ramanuja his *gurudeva*, "Please I beg you, you are so important to this world but I am insignificant. If this world loses your association then it has lost everything, there is no hope. But I am insignificant, so please let me go and accept this debate and you hide, otherwise they will kill you." So Ramanujacarya, seeing the great desire of his devotee, he put on the white cloth and left Sri Rangam in the guise of a *grihasta* and nobody knew where he was leaving and Kuresa put on his *guru's sannyasa's* robes. Mahapurna said, "I will go with you and defend the truth." So they left with the soldiers, and meanwhile Ramanujacarya and his disciples went into exile.

Mahapurna and Kuresa came to the court of Kolatunga. Kolatunga asked them 'what is the goal and purpose of life.' Kuresa replied that goal of life is to surrender to Lord Vishnu. Hearing this Kolatunga became very angry. He brought the best pundits in the kingdom but Mahapurna and Kuresa defeated each one of them. The king said, sign this statement or you will be tortured and killed. There was a paper which read, "Siva is supreme." Mahapurna and Kuresa signed the paper. Kolatunga was very happy until he read what was written. They had written that, "Even dron is greater than Siva." (dron and siva are measuring weights). The king was outraged and he ordered the soldiers to take them to the forest. He said that because in childhood days "Ramanujacarya saved the life of my daughter, I'll not kill him but remove his eyes." So he told his soldiers to

pluck out their eyes. The soldiers had red hot iron rods and they blinded them. Kuresa folded his arms and prayed for the guards. Even guards hearts melted.

The Haunted Princess: There was an incident that took place sometime before. When Ramanujacarya was still a student at the *ashram* of Yadavaprakash, Yadavaprakash was not only a great *mayavadi* but he was also a mystic yogi and a magician. He was very famous for exorcising ghost, remove them from haunted people. So the kings daughter princess, she was being haunted by a ghost. She was just totally mad and crazy all blasphemous were coming from her mouth, although she was a very quiet shy girl. So they called for Yadavaprakash and he was doing all of his rituals to exorcise the ghost and the ghost with a high shrills spoke through the mouth of this girl the princess. She said, "Yadavaprakash, you have no power to get rid to me, you might as well give up all your futile attempts. I am so much more powerful than you." And Yadavaprakash, his whole image and his reputation was on the line, so he was trying again and again with no avail. But finally the ghost again spoke in a terrible shrilling voice through the mouth of this young princess that, "There is no hope, the only possibility is if your disciple, your youngest disciple Ramanuja comes, because of his purity of heart I will be forced to leave." So others heard this, so Yadavaprakash was forced to call his disciple Ramanuja and Ramanuja came very gentle and very humble and he began to pray to Lord Narayana, "Please, save this girl." And at that time while he was praying the ghost spoke through the mouth of the girl and said, "Ramanuja, I will only leave the body of this girl if you put your lotus feet on my head." So then the princess who was completely being controlled by the ghost bowed down and put her head on the ground and then Ramanuja placed his feet on the princess head and then Ramanuja said to the ghost, "What will be the sign that you have actually left this girl?" She said, "There is a banyan tree that we are sitting under and she said, the highest branch of this banyan tree will crack and fall to the ground as soon as I leave." Just within seconds the highest branch of the banyan tree cracked and fell to the ground.

Kuresa an ideal disciple: After Kuresa defeated the ministers, they wanted to kill him but the princess appeared she said, "He saved my life, how can you kill him? He saved me from that ghost, you cannot kill him." So instead of killing they burned his eyes out.

Just see the great dedication of a disciple for his spiritual master. Then they took Kuresa and they just threw him in a jungle area where he was completely lost and they left him there. So Kuresa was feeling very grateful to Lord Narayana that he was allowed to do such a wonderful service for his spiritual master. He was not thinking, oh! I have surrendered I have done all this for my guru and look what is happening. I am blind and lost and probably starved to death. He was very grateful. He was very happy that "By your mercy my Lord, you are so kind you have allowed me to do such a wonderful seva for my gurudeva."

This is the quality of a real disciple. He is willing to give his life for his guru. He is willing to accept any inconvenience gladly with a grateful, happy and joyful heart.

Koorathazhwar was the ultimate symbol of Perfection - The Perfect disciple with the Perfect knowledge. He lived for 110 years, spending his final days in Srirangam before returning to the spiritual abode.



Kooram Sri Koorathazhwan Adikesava Perumal Temple

Kooram is the birthplace of great devotee Sri Koorathalwar (or Kuresh) and there is a temple dedicated to him. He was the prime disciple of Sripad Ramanujacarya. He is an epitome of humbleness and person with unmatched guru bhakti. Although born into a rich family, he gave away all his material wealth and became a disciple of Sri Ramanuja. He lost his eyes in an act to protect his guru Ramanuja from the fanatics. He helped Ramanuja compose the Sri Bhasyam.



Lord Sri Adikesava Perumal at Kooram

This temple has two parts one dedicated to Sri Adi Kesava Perumal and the second part dedicated to Koorathalwar.



Koorathalwar or Kuresa

15. Sri Veeraraghava Perumal Temple (or Tiruvallore)

In *Satya Yuga*, a sage by name Purupunyar lived with his wife Satyavathi in Badarikashram. They had no children. Purupanyar performed a Sali Yajna. (Putrakameshti Yaga) with great fervor and devotion. The Sage offered 1000 Ahutis (oblations of gheeto the sacrificial fire after chanting the mantra each time) every day, for one full year. 'On the last day, when Purnahuti (the final offering) was performed, Lord Narayana was pleased with the austerity of the ritualistic observances of the Sage, and appeared in the sacrificial fire in a blissful mood to offer boons. The Sage prayed for a noble son. The boon was granted with the condition that he should be named after the name of the Yajna as Salihotran. With this blessing, Lord Narayana disappeared. Then the Sage collected the ash strewn around the Yajna Peetha and gave a handful of it to his wife to take in with great veneration as Prasadam. In the tenth month after that, a glorious son was born to Sage Purupunyar. The child was named *Salihotran* as ordained by Lord Narayana. With the growth of years, the child showed signs of precocity and started on a pilgrimage-visiting temple after temple. On *Tai Amavasya day* (new Moon day in Jan-Feb), he reached Tiruvallur where he found that Lord Brahma, other Devas and great sages like Vasishtha, were engaged in taking bath in the *Hrittapanasini tank*.

Next year, on the same *Pushya Amavasya* day, he completed one year of penance and took a holy bath in the *Hrittapanasini* tank and observed his morning prayers. As he was fasting for one year without food or drink, he collected on that day some paddy and prepared prasadam out of that. He divided it into three parts; the first part was offered to Lord Narayana. The second part was kept for offering as charity and the third for his own consumption. At this juncture, Lord Narayana took the form of an old Brahmin and came the way where Salihotran was waiting to offer the share to a guest. When Salihotran saw the old Brahmin, he immediately requested him to grace his hermitage. He respectfully offered to the Brahmin the prasadam meant for the guest. Quickly the Brahmin ate up the offering and Salihotran felt from his facial appearance that he was not satisfied.

On inquiry, he learnt that the old Brahmin had had no food for the last 4 or 5 days and his hunger was not fully satisfied. At this, the portion kept for himself was offered to the guest. The guest was satisfied and left the place. Salihotran commenced another year's penance without food and drink. Again, on the day of *Pushya Amavasya* at its close, he

took his holy bath in the tank and noticed many unusual good omens on his way. After finishing his morning rituals, he procured some paddy and prepared oblations. Like the previous year, he offered a portion to Lord Narayana and was waiting for a guest to offer the second portion, leaving the last portion for him. This time also, Lord Narayana took the form of an old Brahmin and was coming by that way. *Salihotran* welcomed him and while accompanying him to the hermitage, the old Brahmin expressed that he was feeling extremely hungry and thirsty and needed a place for rest also. In the hermitage, *Salihotran* offered the entire prasadam meant for the guest as well as for himself. The old Brahmin was greatly pleased and asked *Salihotran*, "*Where is the place for me to lie (Evvul)?*" The prince was so charmed by the beauty of the princess that he voluntarily expressed that he, a prince was on the lookout for a bride. The princess advised the prince to go and worship Lord Veeraraghava in the temple situated on the northern bank of *Hrittapanasini* tank, if he wanted to marry her.

But the prince did not move, but argued that if the mutual love was real, God Himself would come down to approve of it. The princess then sent for her parents. Arriving there, they enquired about the prince's lineage but the prince would not divulge his identity. However, he swore by Lord Veeraraghava that after his marriage with the princess, he would stay there. This being a very sound proposal, the marriage was fixed; and performed. Following the traditional custom of offering prayer at the temple after marriage, by the newly wedded couple, the prince and princess, accompanied by the parents and the invited guests, went to the temple of Lord Veeraraghava. When they approached the sanctum sanctorum, to the utter amazement of all present, the newly married couple merged into the deity and stood transformed as Lord Veeraraghava, and his divine consort *Kanakavalli*, who blissfully blessed the parents and the assembly to attain salvation after their preordained, stay in the world.

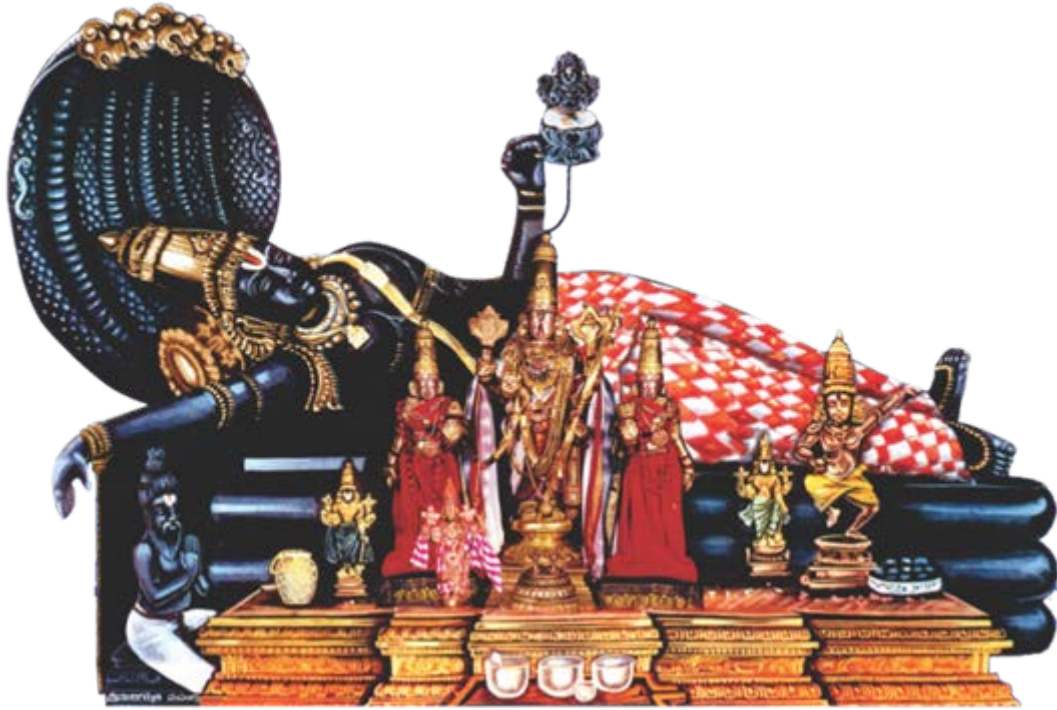
The sacred tank here is known as *Hrittapanasini*. The following Sanskrit sloka describes the sanctity of the tank:

*darsanat sparsanat snanat, sadyo hrittapanasanah,
ato sarveshu lokeshu, namna Hrittapanasanah*

The tank is so holy that evens a sight or a touch or a bath would immediately dispel all anguish of heart. The temple is praised in the *Prabandham* hymns of Tirumangai Azwar, Tirumazhisaipiran and Vaishnavite Acharya Sri Nikamanta Maha Desikan. Lord Vishnu is worshipped as *Veeeraraghava Perumal* and His consort Lakshmi as *Kamalavalli Thayar*. Lord Veeraraghava Perumal in a reclining posture facing east. *Abisheka* to Lord is performed with perfumed oil only. The temple witnesses a huge devotee crowd in thousands during the two Brahmotsavams, the first of 10 days in *Chithirai* (April-May). This *Divya Desam* is located at Tiruvallur, a railhead on the (suburban) railroad between Chennai and Arakkonam. Nearby are the Tiruppaasoor and the Tiruvaalankaadu Shivastalams and Tirumazhisai, the birthplace of Tirumazhisai Azhwar.

Temple Tank - Hrittapanasini: Located on the southern side of the temple, spread over an area of 7.35 acres, the sacred tank of Tiruvallur is known as *Hrith-Thapa-Nasini*. The tank is one of the most sacred *tirthas* of Sri Vaishnava *sthalas*. On the new moon day, every month thousands of people take a dip in this holy *tirtha* and pray to Lord Vaidhya Veeraraghava Swami to cure any of their illness.

Aayarpadi - Gosala: The temple has developed a sprawling well-maintained Gosala. Named as 'Aayarpadi', it is well equipped and is located in an excellent environment, away from the temple. Gosala is located opposite to R.T.O office on Tirupati Highway, around 3kms from the temple. The milk from the Gosala is used for the temple puja and for *annadanam* conducted by the *Devasthanam*.



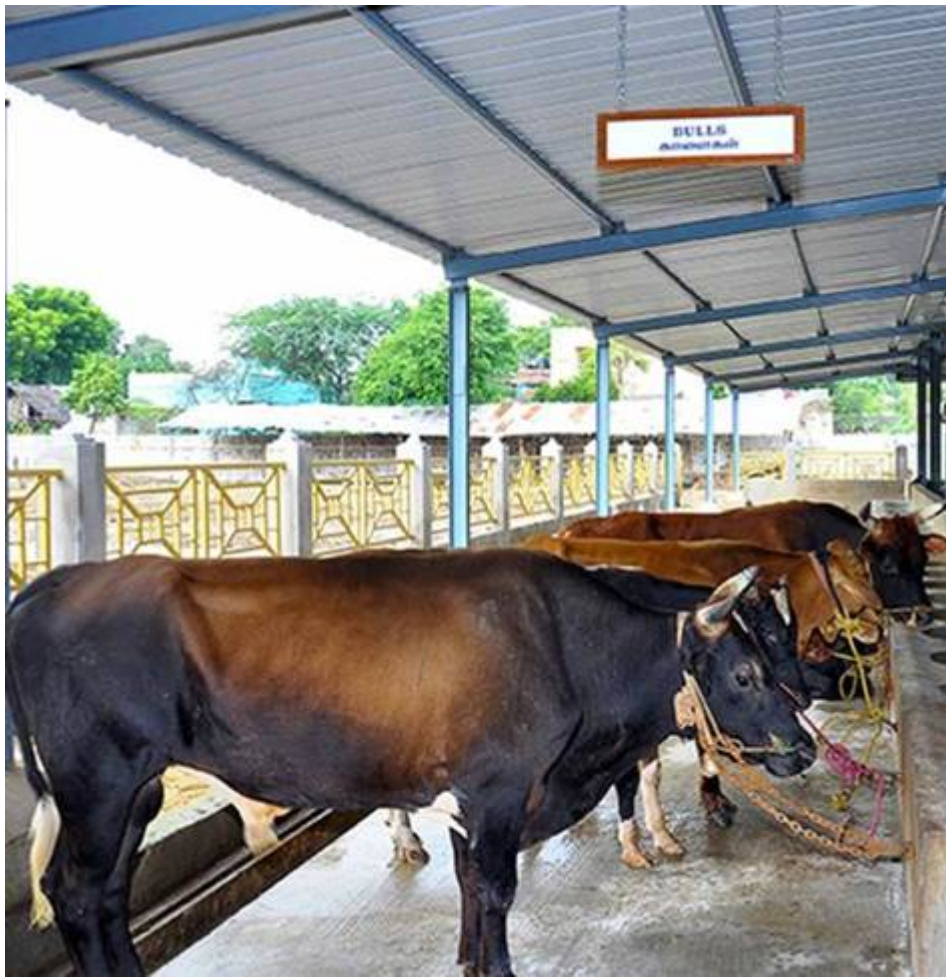
Lord Sri Veeraraghava Perumal

Lord Vishnu is worshipped here as *Veeeraraghava Perumal* and His consort Lakshmi as *Kamalavalli Thayar*. Lord Veeraraghava Perumal in a reclining posture facing east. *Abisheka* ceremony to Lord is performed with perfumed oil only.



Hrittapanasini - sacred tank

This tank is one of the most sacred *tirthas*.



Goshala at Sri Veeraraghava Perumal Temple

16. Sri Bhaktavatsala Perumal Temple (or Thiru Nindravoor)

Sri Bhakthavatsala Perumal temple is located at Thirunindravur, which is a suburb in the north-western part of Chennai city. The name 'Thirunindravur' comes from 'Thiru,' the name for Lakshmi and 'Nindra,' which refers to standing, and 'Vur,' which refers to a village or place. Lakshmi was once travelling through the sky when she saw this beautiful village in which she stood and she wondered how beautiful this village, thus the place came to be known as 'Thiru-ninra-vur', the village where Lakshmi stood. This temple is also called *Srinivasa Ksetram* and is among the 108 *Divya Desams* of Vaishnava tradition. *Varuna*, father of Lakshmi, worshipped Lord Vishnu here. Thirunindravur is considered a place dedicated to Lakshmi as she settled here first and then the Lord came here. A unique feature of this temple is that Bhakthavatsala Perumal stays permanently at his in-law's place.

According to legend, Thirumangai Azhwar had visited this temple and left to Thirukkadal Mallai (Mahabalipuram), without singing a single *pasuram* (devotional song) on the Lord. After he left, Sri Bhakthavatsala Perumal gave *darshan* to him again at Thirukkadal Mallai. Thirumangai Azhwar sang two *pasurams* on the Lord, admiring the beauty and similarities of the deities in Thirukkadal Mallai, Thirunindravur and Thirukkanna Mangai. In later days, with the divine instructions of the Lord, a Pallava king constructed this temple and arranged for Brahmotsavam and other celebrations. Sri Bhakthavatsala Perumal is in standing posture, facing east. Other deities are Sri Ennai Petra Thaayaar, Sri Andal, Sri Chakrathazhwar and Sri Adhishesan. There is also a Paramapatha Vaasal. The temple has a nice pond nearby, called *Varuna Pushkarani*, which is the holy *tirtham* for this temple. This beautiful temple looks very grand with huge *praakaarams* and compound walls. There is a stone *mandapam* on the outer *praakaaram*, meant for celebrations, with beautiful carvings.

Thirunindravur is located around 32 km from Chennai on the Chennai-Arakkonam rail route. It is within the Chennai Metropolitan Area. The neighbourhood is served by Thirunindravur railway station. On the banks of a lake a few meters behind this temple is another temple for Lord Ramacandra. In this temple there is a deity of Hanuman lifting Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders.



Sri Bhaktavatsala Perumal or Thiru Nindravoor

The name 'Thirunindravur' comes from 'Thiru,' the name for Lakshmi and 'Nindra,' which refers to standing, and 'Vur,' which refers to a village or place.

Lakshmi was once travelling through the sky when she saw this beautiful village in which she stood and she wondered how beautiful this village, thus the place came to be known as 'Thiru-ninra-vur', the village where Lakshmi stood. This temple is also called *Srinivasa Ksetram* and is among the 108 *Divya Desams* of Vaishnava tradition. *Varuna*, father of Lakshmi, worshipped Lord Vishnu here. Thirumangai Azhwar had visited this temple and left to Thirukkadal Mallai (Mahabalipuram), without singing a single *pasuram* (devotional song) on the Lord. After he left, Sri Bhakthavatsala Perumal gave *darshan* to him again at Thirukkadal Mallai. Thirumangai Azhwar sang two *pasurams* on the Lord, admiring the beauty and similarities of the deities in Thirukkadal Mallai, Thirunindravur and Thirukkanna Mangai.

17. Hare Krishna Temple (ISKCON) Chennai - Sri Sri Radha-Krishna Temple

Hare Krishna Temple (ISKCON) Chennai is dedicated to Lord Sri Krishna. This magnificent temple is located on the East Coast Road at Akkarai, Sholinganallur in Chennai. The deities worshipped in the temple are Their Lordships *Sri Sri Radha-Krishna*, *Sri Sri Jagannatha*, *Baladeva*, *Subhadra* and *Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga*. Spread over an area of over 1.5 acres, the temple is constructed on five levels. There is a 7,000 sq ft temple hall on the first floor, an auditorium for cultural and spiritual programmes on the ground floor and a prasadam hall in the basement. In the temple hall, there are three beautifully carved teak-wood altars which house the deities of Lord Krishna with His consort Radharani and their assisting friends Lalita and Vishaka, Lord Caitanya with Lord Nityananda and Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. Designed under the guidance of His Holiness Bhanu Swami, the temple has imbibed various attributes from

Vedic scripture and is inspired by the Pallava and Kalinga architecture. The entrance to the temple is marked by the representation of the universe or the *bhu-mandala* on the marble floor. According to the cosmology of ancient Vedic *puranas*, the universe is described as series of circular islands surrounding a central pillar called Mount Meru. The design on the floor at the entrance depicts the same universal pattern. There is also a life-like statue of a cow feeding its calf at the portico. *The primary purpose of the temple to transform the material self-centred identity into a spiritual identity of unconditional love for Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna.* The temple also visually displays various *vastu sastra* features. Here you can find many books and souvenirs on spirituality and Krishna Consciousness. The temple is open from 7:30 am to 1pm and from 4pm to 8:00 pm. However, the last *arati* (worship), called the *sayana arati*, is at 9:00 pm, which lasts about 15 mins.

ISKCON: *International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) or popularly known as Hare Krishna Movement* is a movement aiming at the spiritual reorientation of mankind through the simple process of chanting the holy names of God. The human life is meant for ending the miseries of material existence. Our present-day society is trying to do so by material progress. However, in spite of the extensive material progress, the human society is not in peaceful condition. The reason is that a human being is essentially a spirit soul and belongs to the spiritual world where he has an eternal and sweet relationship with the Supreme Lord. The Krishna Consciousness movement aims at awakening love of God within the heart of everyone and reviving their eternal relationship with God.

The Krishna consciousness movement is also known as the *sankirtana* movement, the movement for spreading the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. Superficially, this chanting may appear to be the repetition of some ordinary words, but it is not. It requires a little practice to experience its effect. The effect of chanting Hare Krishna is stated by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu: *ceto-darpana-majanam*. "It will cleanse your heart." If we go on chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, gradually the dirty things accumulated within our heart will be cleansed away. The Krishna consciousness movement is genuine, historically authorized, natural and transcendental due to its being based on Bhagavad-Gita As It Is. The knowledge of Krishna Consciousness has been transmitted through an unbroken chain of teachers and students stemming from the Lord Himself, and has been presented in its original unadulterated form by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It is gradually becoming the most popular movement in the entire world, with more than 600 worldwide centres and literature in as many as 70 languages.

About Srila Prabhupada: *His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977) is widely regarded as the world's pre-eminent exponent of the teachings and practices of Bhakti-yoga to the Western world. He is a Gaudiya Vaishnava spiritual teacher and the Founder-acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), commonly known as the "Hare Krishna Movement". Born Abhay Charan De on September 1, 1896, in Calcutta, as a youth he became involved with Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience movement. It was, however, a meeting with a prominent scholar and spiritual leader, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, which proved most influential on young Abhay's future calling. Upon their first meeting Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, who represented an ancient tradition of Bhakti (devotional yoga), asked Abhay to bring the teachings of Krishna to the English-speaking world. From birth, Abhay had been raised in a family devoted to Krishna - the name meaning the all-attractive, all-loving Lord. Deeply moved by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's devotion and wisdom, Abhay became his disciple and dedicated himself to carrying out his mentor's request. But it wasn't until 1965, at the age of 69, that he would set off on his mission*

to the West. Recognizing Srila Prabhupada's philosophical learning and devotion, the Gaudiya Vaisnava Society honored him in 1947 with the title "Bhaktivedanta". In 1950, at the age of 54, Srila Prabhupada retired from married life, adopting the vanaprastha (retired) order to devote more time to his studies and writing. Srila Prabhupada travelled to the holy town of Vrindavana, where he lived in very humble circumstances in the historic medieval temple of Sri Sri Radha-Damodara. There he engaged for several years in deep study and writing. He accepted the renounced order of life (sannyasa) in 1959. In 1965, at the age of 69, he set off to the West to fulfil the mission of his spiritual master, begging free passage and boarding a cargo ship to New York. The journey proved to be treacherous, and the elderly spiritual teacher suffered two heart attacks aboard ship. After 35 days at sea he finally arrived at a lonely Brooklyn pier with just \$7 dollars in Indian rupees and a crate of his translations of sacred Sanskrit texts. In New York he faced great hardships without money or a place to live. He began his mission humbly, by giving classes on the Bhagavad-Gita in lofts on the Bowery, New York's infamous skid row, and leading kirtan (traditional devotional chants) in Tompkins Square Park. His message of peace and goodwill resonated with many young people, some of whom came forward to become serious students of the Krishna-bhakti tradition. With the help of these students, Bhaktivedanta Swami rented a small storefront on New York's Lower East Side to use as a temple. After a year of hardship and struggle, in July of 1966, Bhaktivedanta Swami established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) for the purpose of checking the imbalance of values in the world and working for real unity and peace. He brought to the West the divine teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu who taught the public glorification of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. Srila Prabhupada taught that every living being is an eternal servant of Lord Sri Krishna with a dormant natural propensity to experience the eternal bliss of pure love of God. He taught that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of God and that one could find true happiness through living a simpler, more natural way of life and dedicating one's energy in the service of God.

Having begun initiating his American followers into the Gaudiya Vaishnava lineage, Bhaktivedanta Swami next traveled to San Francisco. Amidst the emerging hippie community in the Haight-Ashbury district, during 1967's "Summer of Love" he taught that the experience of devotion through kirtan was a spiritual "high" superior to any pleasures derived from material sources such as wealth, fame, or intoxication. In the following months many more came forward to assist him. Desiring to address him with the respect due a revered spiritual teacher, his disciples began to call him Srila Prabhupada, meaning "one at whose feet the masters sit". In the 11 years that followed, Srila Prabhupada circled the globe fourteen times, bringing the teachings of Bhakti to thousands of people on six continents. Men and women from all backgrounds came forward to accept his message. With their help, Srila Prabhupada established centers and projects throughout the world including temples, rural communities, educational institutions, and what would become the world's largest vegetarian food relief program. With the desire to nourish the roots of Krishna-bhakti in its home, Srila Prabhupada returned to India several times, where he sparked a revival in the Bhakti tradition. In India, he opened dozens of temples, including important centres in the holy towns of Vrindavana and Mayapur. Srila Prabhupada also started Jagannatha Rathayatra in the West. Today Lord Jagannatha Rathayatra is organized in many major cities and towns in more than 165 countries. Srila Prabhupada's most significant contribution are his books. Highly respected by the academic community for their authority, depth and clarity, they are used as standard textbooks in numerous college courses. By 1977 when Srila Prabhupada left this world in Vrindavana he had completed over 70 volumes of authoritative translations and commentaries including the Bhagavad-Gita As It Is, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Caitanya Caritamrta and Sri Isopanisad. His writings have been translated into over 50 languages. His writings constitute a veritable library of Vedic

philosophy, religion, literature and culture. The Bhaktivedanta Vedabase has been created so that this great reservoir of knowledge may be preserved and propagated and so that all may take advantage of the wisdom and association of the pure devotee of Lord Sri Krishna. For millennia the teachings of Bhakti-yoga had been concealed within Sanskrit and Indian vernacular languages, and the rich culture of Bhakti had been hidden behind the borders of India. Today, millions around the globe express their gratitude to Srila Prabhupada for revealing the timeless wisdom of Bhakti to a world immersed in a materialistic and self-destructive ethos.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is considered as world's foremost spiritual ambassador. It is through his standard of purity, unprecedented dedication and genuineness that has instilled the hearts of many millions throughout the world with Krishna-Bhakti. He passed away on November 14, 1977, in the holy town of Vrindavana, surrounded by his loving disciples who carry on his mission today. Though no longer physically present among us, Srila Prabhupada lives forever in his books, and in the hearts of those whose lives he touched.

About ISKCON Chennai: ISKCON founder A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who carried the message of Lord Chaitanya to various parts of the world, was very keen to establish strong centres in India. In 1971, when he returned to India after his success with Krishna consciousness in the Western world, he directed His Holiness Giriraj Swami Maharaj to go to Madras and preach activities, resulting in many enlisting as life patrons. Prabhupada wrote in a letter, "In Madras we wanted to start a centre and it was almost settled that the Chief Justice (Veeraswamy) would give us a place. So actually, if it is possible to open a centre in Madras that would be very nice."

Prabhupada visited Madras in February 1972 and delivered lectures. In 1975, a centre was opened at 50 Aspiran Gardens, 2nd Street, Kilpauk, which was later shifted to Kilpauk Garden Road. In 1988, the centre moved to T. Nagar, where the congregation of Chennai ISKCON increased greatly. During a morning walk on 18 Dec 1975, Prabhupada remarked: "*Now our European and American boys are preaching in South India and big, big acaryas have received them.*" In Jan 1976, Prabhupada visited Madras again and lectured in AVM Rajeswari Kalyana Mandapam, Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai and in the house of the then Chief Justice Veeraswamy. Inspired by the positive response to Krishna consciousness in Madras, Prabhupada wrote a letter to his disciples in Madras: "*In Madras we have to construct a very gorgeous temple... Now immediately find out some land and begin the construction. Never mind what the cost will be. We are not concerned with the amount of money, but we want a very attractive temple. The money should come from the gentlemen of Madras.*" However, the effort to fulfil the desire of Prabhupada to build a "gorgeous temple" in Chennai did not prove fruitful until year 2000 when devotees serving under the leadership of Bhanu Swami located 6.5 acres of land in Injambakkam and acquired immediately for construction of the temple. The construction of the first phase of the project began on March 2002. The *prana pratishtha* (deity installation) ceremony, when the deities of Lord Krishna and Radha and Their *sakhis* - *Lalitha and Vishaka* - were installed in one of the three beautifully carved teak-wood altars in the main hall, and *Kumbhabhishekam* were performed in April 2012.

Temple address: ISKCON - Sri Sri Radha Krishna Temple, Hare Krishna Land, Bhaktivedanta Swami Road, Off ECR, Akkarai, Sholinganallur, Chennai. Website: www.iskconofchennai.org



Hare Krishna Temple (ISKCON) Chennai

This magnificent temple is located on the East Coast Road at Akkarai, Sholinganallur in Chennai. The deities worshipped in the temple are Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Krishna, Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva, Subhadra and Sri Sri Nitai Gauranga.



Hare Krishna Temple (ISKCON) Chennai

In the temple hall, there are three beautifully carved teak-wood altars which house the deities of Lord Krishna with His consort Radharani and their assisting friends Lalita and Vishaka, Lord Caitanya with Lord Nityananda and Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. Temple has imbibed various attributes from Vedic scriptures.



Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha Krishna and sakhis Lalita and Vishakha
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Sri Sri Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra
Krishna consciousness movement is also known as the sankirtana movement, the movement for spreading the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. The effect of chanting Hare Krishna is stated by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu: ceto-darpana-majanam. "It will cleanse your heart." If we go on chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, gradually the dirty things accumulated within our heart will be cleansed away.



Sri Sri Gaura Nitai

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18. Srinivasa Perumal Temple at Elanagar

Srinivasa Perumal Temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu located at Elanagar Village in Uthiramerur Taluk of Kanchipuram district. It is situated approximately 25kms from Kanchipuram on the road leading to Vandavasi. It was also home to several eminent Sri Vaishanva families who rendered services to the cause of Sri Vaishnavism. Gaddam Tatha Desikan, one of the spiritual leaders in Sri Vaishnavism, had done *tirtha kainkaryam* for Sri Srinivasa Perumal of Tirumala, bringing water every day from Akasa Ganga (a sacred waterfall in Tirumala) and performing Thirumanjanam and other rituals for this deity.

One day, a thirsty man asked him for water, and having given it to him, Gaddam Tatha Desikan went back to Akasa Ganga to bring more water for the temple. However, the thirsty man appeared again and again and on repeatedly bringing water, Sri Desikan became tired and fainted. That man then revealed himself to be the deity enshrined in the Tirumala temple and blessed him. He ordered Tatha Desikan to construct five temples for himself with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi in the villages of Paiyoor, Elanagar, Karumbur, Natteri and Vilankuppam. On the orders of Srinivasa Perumal, Gaddam Tatha Desikan constructed this Srinivasa Perumal temple in 1212 A.D. in Elanagar.

Elanagar was the original home of many *Azhagiyasingars* belonging to one family of the famous Sri Ahobila Mutt. The Ahobila Mutt was founded in 1398 A.D. by Sri Adivan Satakopa Yatindra Mahadesikan. According to traditional accounts, Srivan Satakopa Parankusa Yatindra Mahadesikan was the 10th Jiyar of the Ahobila Mutt and was from the Elanagar Chakravarthi family. He learned many *sastras* from the 9th Jiyar Srivan Satakopa Narayana Yatindra Mahadesikan. He established the agraharam named Gada Dharapuram near Kumbakonam. The members of the Elanagar family later migrated to Gadadharapuram and hence are known as the Elanagar-Gadadharapuram family.

The Srinivasa Perumal temple in Elanagar is a very small shrine. The entrance to the temple, as well as the main deity, faces east. In the main sanctum sanctorum Srinivasa Perumal is seen standing holding the *Sankha* and *Chakra* in his upper hands, with his lower right hand in *varada hasta* (boon giving pose) and lower left hand as though placed on top of his *mace*. This image is seen with *Sri Devi* and *Bhu Devi* on either side. The processional images of this temple are similar to the main one. The other *Utsava* - Vighrahas worshipped in this shrine are Navaneetha Krishna and Chakrathaazhwar (Sri Sudarsana).

The *vimana* above the main sanctum is known as Srihari Ramanujacharya, the famous Sri vaishanva preceptor and an image of the Sri Vedanta Desika was consecrated in this temple recently. Lakshmi, the consort of Srinivasa Perumal is worshipped as Padmavathi Thayar. Her sanctum, which also faces east, is seen in the small *mantapa* through which devotees have to pass before reaching the main shrine. The *Utsava-murti* of Padmavathi Thayar is worshipped in the main sanctum for safety reasons. In this mantapa are stone images of Sri Vasudeva, Vishvaksetna, Nammazhwar, Sri Ramanuja and Sri Vedanta Desika, all facing south. There is a tall *deepa-sthambham* (lamp post) of one piece of stone immediately in front of the *mantapa*. An inscription etched on the outer wall of the temple, near the main entrance is clearly visible. This record is in Tamil language and script, but unfortunately, only one part of it can be seen. It is datable to the late 19th or early 20th century A.D. and registers a charity of a certain amount of money and is dated in Dathu year and in the Tamil month of Chittirai. A few festivals are celebrated in this temple which follows the Vaikhanasa Agama. The festivals conducted by the Elanagar Sri Srinivasa Kainkarya Trust are Ramanuja Jayanti, celebrated in the month of Chittirai; Tiruvadipuram in the month of Adi, Perumal Avatara Utsavam and Vedanta

Desika Tiru nakshatram during Sravanam Nakshatram in the month of Purattasi and Panguni Uttiram in the month of Panguni. Other than these Varushapirappu in Chittirai and Sri Jayanti are also celebrated in this temple.

A unique festival is celebrated in the month of Vaikasi in the asterism of Visakam where there is full moon. Fifteen Utsava-murtis of Vishnu with Garuda from fifteen Vishnu temples in the Kanchipuram-Vandavasi route go to River Cheyyar near Cheyyar town. There, each is placed in a separate mantapa where Thirumanjanam and decoration are performed for them. Later, they return to their respective temples. The fifteen deities who are worshipped during this unique festival are Pesumperumal from Koozhamandal, Varadaraja Perumal from Perunagar, Srinivasa Perumal from Manampati, Lakshmi Narayana Perumal from Tandarai, Pundarikaksh Perumal from Visur, Vaikuntha Srinivasa Perumal from Elanirkunram, Kalyana Venkatesa Perumal from Sethupattu, Kaliya Perumal from Athi, Venkatesa Perumal from Pendai, Venugopalan from Ukkal, Srinivasa Perumal from Elanagar, Srinivasa Perumal from Teturai, Venkatesa Perumal from Mahajanampakkam, Lakshmi Narayana Perumal from Nedungal and Lakshmi Narayana Perumal from Vellamalai.

The Srinivasa Perumal temple in Elanagar had, for a long time, been in a very dilapidated condition. Due to the efforts taken by the members of the Sri Elanagar Sri Srinivasa Perumal Kainkarya Trust, this shrine has been renovated I year 2005. Elanagar can be reached by going down the road from Kanchipuram to Vandavasi, passing through the villages of Mamandur, Doosi, Ukkal and Koozhamandal and reaching the village of Perunagar. Opposite to the police station in Perunagar is a lane leading to Elanagar. This temple is tucked away in the interior of Elanagar village. Elanagar village is about 10 km from Uthiramerur. Elanagar is in Uthiramerur Taluk in Kanchipuram district. It is located 24 km towards south from district headquarters Kanchipuram and 9 km from Uthiramerur.



Lord Srinivasa Perumal

Srinivasa Perumal Temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu located at Elanagar Village in Uthiramerur Taluk of Kanchipuram district. It is situated approximately 25kms from Kanchipuram on the road leading to Vandavasi. It was also home to several eminent Sri Vaishanva families who rendered services to the cause of Sri Vaishnavism. Gaddam Tatha Desikan, one of the spiritual leaders in Sri Vaishnavism, had done *tirtha kainkaryam* for Sri Srinivasa Perumal of Tirumala, bringing water every day from Akasa Ganga (a

sacred waterfall in Tirumala) and performing Thirumanjanam and other rituals for this deity.

19. Ramanujar Sannidhi at Sevilimedu

Ramanujar Sannidhi is the place where Ramanujar used to live after estranging himself from married life. This is the place where Thirumazhisai Aalwar along with Kani Kannan and Yadotkaari stayed for one night during banishment of Kani Kannan from the kingdom. Ramanujar used to take water from the nearby well and do *Thirumanjanam* to Sri Varadharajar temple. This temple exactly faces Varadharajar temple and its gopurams are visible from here.



Well from which Sripad Ramanuja offered water to Lord Varadaraja Perumal



Sripad Ramanuja carrying water from Sevilimedu to Lord Varadaraja Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram



Sripad Ramanuja Sannidhi (altar) at Sevilimedu

This the place where Ramanujar used to live after estranging himself from married life.

20. Ranganathar Temple at Nathamedu

Ranganathar Temple is a small temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu located at Nathamedu Village near Kalpakkam in Kanchipuram District. Ranganathar, who is usually seen in a *Sayana* posture, is seen here in an unusual sitting posture and that too in a very stylish and relaxed posture.



Lord Ranganathar at Nathamedu

Lord Ranganathar, who is usually seen in a *Sayana* posture, is seen here in an unusual sitting posture and that too in a very stylish and relaxed posture.

21. Sri Lakshmi Narayana Perumal at Pulikkundram

Sri Lakshmi Narayana Perumal at Pulikkundram is a beautiful temple 3 km from Thirukazhukundram, an ancient town in Kanchipuram district. Temple was built between 1509 AD to 1529 AD during the reign of Krishnadevaraya Wodeyar of Vijayanagar kingdom. Temple is very well maintained. Address: Lakshmi Narayana Perumal Temple, Pulikundram Village, Puliur Post - 600 109, Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu.



Sri Lakshmi Narayana Perumal at Pulikkundram

22. Sri Adhi Kesava Perumal Temple at Kazhiyur

Kazhiyur village is located 18 km from Kanchipuram near Cheyyar about 81 km from Thiruvannamalai and 103 km from Chennai. Almost 130 years ago Sri Vaishnavaites migrated from Mannargudi another holy place in Tanjavur and came to settle down in this village. It is said that a plague like epidemic made people leave Mannargudi long, long back. The Sri Vaishnavas were disciples of His Holiness Mudaliandaan Swamigal who is the first and the dearest disciples of Sripad Ramanujacarya. Sri Vaishnavas carried the deity of Lord Adhi Keshava Perumal all the way from Mannargudi on their head to Kazhiyur the present place and worshipped the Lord by constructing a temple with the locals support. It is not a practice to abandon Perumal even in adverse circumstances. The Lordship gives *darshan* in *Nindra Thirukolam* (standing posture). After their resettlement in Kazhiyur, the village became a cradle of Vedic scholars, purohiths and astrologers. The devoted families lived in the *Agraharam* (first row of houses built around the temple and occupied by the temple priests). The *Agraharam* is located around the temple of 'Sri Adhi Keshava Perumal Swamy', which was also built and maintained with financial support from the local Mudaliars and many devotees. Kazhiyur has been a great centre of Vedic Astrology. They have been uniformly well versed in astrology and are keepers of the most ancient astrological knowledge in the world. Almost all of them have been treated like the religious leaders and the astrological guides from time immemorial. Many Kazhiyur families have been practicing astrology for more than seven generations in an unbroken tradition since they first arrived in 1840. After moving to Kazhiyur the Sri Vaishnavaites engaged themselves in agriculture apart from performing the temple services. Due to this reason they are also called the *Mannar Mudumbai* families a direct connection to Lokacharyar Swamy Pillai Lokacharyar's legacy. They were orthodox and are considered to be an authority on Sri Vaishnavism. Unlike other South Indians who carry the name of village and the name of the father as their initials the Kazhiyur Sri Vaishnavas use the initials K. M. meaning *Kazhiyur Mannar*. It was an attempt to retain the Mannargudi identity. The priests from Kazhiyur have been serving in some *seva* or other in almost all the 106 Sri Vaishnavite temples and the majority of them at Tirumala, Sholingur and

southern side Vaishnava *divya desams*. The first Priest who served even in the Temples at United states of America are from Kazhiyur. Kazhiyur is also closely connected with the Sri Ramar *sannadhi* and the temple of Shree Govindaraja at the foothills of the Tirupati temple. Sri Vaishnavas from Kazhiyur were also chosen to carry the offerings from the Lord of Seven Hills at Tirumalai to the temple of Govindaraja at foothills. The priests walked bare-footed all the way down the hill carrying the offerings on their head. Kazhiyur has been very closely linked to Kanchipuram from the very inception. Every year during the month of January, July and December, the *utsavar* (processional deity) of Lord Adi Keshava Perumal is taken in a procession to the *Iyengar Kulam*, a lake at the outskirts of Kanchipuram. About forty people start the procession and many more join them en-route to Kanchipuram. The procession travels on foot for the entire stretch of 18 km. After arriving at *Iyengar Kulam*, the Lord is given a ceremonial bath in the *kulam* and then taken back to Kazhiyur with pomp and show. This practice has been copied from Lord Varadharaja going to 'Padai Seevaram' on the day of Chithirai Poornima at Tirupati. This practice is also known as 'Parvettam' (forest hunting). Today out of few houses in Kazhiyur Agraharam, only six or seven houses are occupied and the remaining are kept locked. However, every year during the month of April, on the day of *Chittirai Revathi*, the birth star of Lord Adi Keshava, Kazhiyur Sri Vaishnavas from all over the world gather in the village to celebrate the annual festival.



Lord Sri Adhi Kesava Perumal at Kazhiyur

Kazhiyur village is located 18 km from Kanchipuram near Cheyyar. Almost 130 years ago Sri Vaishnavaites Ayyangars migrated from Mannargudi another holy place in Tanjavur and came to settle down in this village. It is said that a plague like epidemic made people leave Mannargudi long, long back. The Sri Vaishnavas were disciples of His Holiness Mudaliandaan Swamikal who is the first and the dearest disciples of Sripad Ramanujacarya. Sri Vaishnavas carried the deity of Lord Adhi Keshava Perumal all the way from Mannargudi on their head to Kazhiyur the present place and worshipped the Lord by constructing a

temple with the locals support. It is not a practice to abandon Perumal even in adverse circumstances. The Lordship gives darshan in Nindra Thirukolam (standing posture). After their resettlement in Kazhiyur, the village became a cradle of Vedic scholars, purohits and astrologers.

Life of Sripad Yamunacarya

[Reference: His Holiness Radhanath Swami Maharaj's South India Yatra 2005]

Sri Ramanujacarya resided, here in Kanchipuram. Daily, worshiped Sri Varadaraja. Before attempting to describe the life of Sri Ramanujacarya, we will speak briefly about some of the well-known incidents in the life of his Guru Maharaj, Sri Yamunacarya. Srila Prabhupada often time quotes beautiful *slokas* from the prayers of Yamunacarya. One quote is, *"I was so much attached to enjoying the pleasures of this world. The highest pleasure of this world is the pleasure of sexual relation. After tasting the sweetness of your loving devotional service, Krishna, when I think of such pleasures, my lips curl in distaste and I spit at the thought." Such an amazing realization. What the whole world is mad after, making so many arrangements to achieve and protect, Yamunacarya is spitting in disgust at the thought of it.*

How he came to this realization? We [HH Radhanath Swami] would like to speak some words. There was a very great saint of the name *Nathamuni*. Very learned scholar, very pure heart, born in a very esteemed *Brahmana* family. Nathamuni was not only a scholar and a devotee, but he also practiced mystic yoga at his various cities. His son was Isvaramuni. Isvaramuni was married. Together, the family went on a pilgrimage. They specially went to the northern provinces and visited Vrindavana. There they saw the 12 forests: *Gokula, Mahavana, Khadiravana, Bahulavana, Kamyavana, Vrindavana, Bhandirvana, Bhadravana*, like that. *Talavana, Kumudavana, Lohavana*. They did Parikrama of Govardhana, and especially they took their baths and worshiped the holy river, Yamuna.

When they returned to Madurai which was their residence, Isvaramuni had a son. In glorification of the Yamuna River, they named him *Yamunacarya*. When he was just a small child, his father died. His grandfather, Nathamuni, he could understand the temporary suffering condition of this world. He left everything and accepted *sannyasa*, totally renounced the world. Simply immersed himself in Bhakti to Lord Narayana. Also made several disciples, preaching the glories of the Lord. In fact, he was the first person to make available, some of the writings of the great Azhwars who were his predecessors. Yamuna lived in poverty, being taken care of by his mother and grandmother. He had such extraordinary good qualities and he was so eager to learn about Lord Krishna. When he was 5 years old, he was sent to the *ashram* of Bhasyacharya. He became favourite student of Bhasyacharya. When he was only 12 years old, some disciples of the great *pundit*, Kolahala came to the *ashram*. Now, this Kolahala was a very, very powerful scholar. He was a Digvijay Pundit. Because of his scholarship, the king, the king of the Pandya Dynasty became very, very much obliged to him. Thus the king made him the court scholar and made a decree, which means a law that, "Anyone who is defeated in debate by Kolahala, must every year, pay tax to him."

These students came before Yamunacarya and they said, "Where is your guru?" He said, "Guru Maharaj is not here. He went out. I'm the only one here." Said, "Who are you? Do you don't know who we are? Audacity, you do not know who we are? We are the disciples of the great Kolahala, the greatest scholar in all the universe who has defeated all men in all directions. Even the king is like a puppet under strings, of the will of Kolahala. Anyone he defeats in debate, must pay taxes to him or according to the king,

that person will be punished with death. Your teacher, Bhasyacharya has been defeated by our great, magnanimous, all powerful guru. Therefore, he must pay tax. Last several years, he has given no tax. What is he, crazy? Does he know the result of this? Either he pays tax or he dies."

Yamunacarya, only 12 year-old boy, he looked at them very gravely. He said, "Your guru is an ignorant fool. How do I know this? If he trains his disciples to be like you, filled with pride, arrogance and disrespect, then all I can say is, your guru is an ignorant fool. It is not even worth the time. Why should my guru waste time, when such a fool is your guru? I happen to be his youngest and lowest student. I challenge Kolahala to a debate. Let us see him face me." His disciples were shocked with his audacity. They were speechless. "Nonsense, you will die." They didn't know what to say. They went back and reported this to Kolahala. Kolahala laughed, "A 12 year-old boy is challenging me to a debate?" He told the king. The king was laughing. Still, you have to honor a challenge, that is the broom and nickel way. The king sent a letter to Yamunacarya and said "Yes, we accept that you will debate." Yamunacarya wrote back. He said, "This is a very, very highly serious debate in your court. You should send the Royal palanquin and you should send Brahmans singing mantras and military guards and everything, to bring me on procession to your court." The king agreed.

In the meanwhile, the whole town of Madurai was just amazed with this. It was unbelievable. The majority of the people were thinking that, "This little boy is going to be crushed in a matter of seconds before Kolahala." There were many Brahmans who were already defeated by him and they were praying, they were praying to the supreme personality of God, "Please empower this boy to crush the pride of Kolahala into fine powder." Little Yamuna was on the palanquin coming, very innocent. Very small body, very innocent, very sweet looking. The King saw and turned to his queen. He said, "Just like a cat devours a mouse, Kolahala is going to defeat this little boy." He said it with great pride. The Queen replied, "Just as a small spark burns a large mountain of cloth to ashes, this little boy is going to destroy the pride of Kolahala."

Kolahala heard her say this. In a sarcastic voice, he turned to the Queen and said, "Ala bandara", which means "Is this the person that's going to conquer me?" The Queen looked at him and said, "Ala bandara." They faced each other, and everyone was intensely watching. It was the match of all matches. Forget your cricket matches, this was a real match of great souls. Kolahala began to present various difficult arguments, but little Yamuna easily answered them. Now, when Bhasyacharya heard that his little, youngest 12-year-old student is going to debate Kolahala, who totally defeated him, he was very worried. Yamunacarya said "No Guru Maharaj, don't fear at all. By your mercy, I will defeat him." Yamunacarya answered every question. Every challenge of Kolahala, Yamunacarya effortlessly responded, perfectly according to shastra, in good logic. Went on and on and on.

The questions were getting more and more difficult, but Yamunacarya just kept answering them. Finally Yamuna looked at him and said, "Why are you asking me such easy questions? You're not giving me any difficult questions. Kolahala was asking the most difficult questions he could possibly think of. Yamuna said "Why are you asking me such easy questions? It's just because I'm such a small boy? Do you think, because I'm small, that makes me an inferior scholar to you? If that's your logic, then a water buffalo is a better scholar than you."

Kolahala was dumbfounded. He said, "Then you ask me questions." Little Yamuna, he said, I have 3 propositions that I will present to you. I want you to defeat the propositions that I present. Kolahala said, "You speak, and I will defeat whatever you

say." He said, "First proposition, that Kolahala, your mother is not a barren woman." First time in his life, Kolahala did not have an answer. How could he prove she's a barren woman. If she was a barren woman, he would not be alive to talk about it. He was dumbfounded. People started to laugh. He became very embarrassed. Yamunacarya, "Oh, you cannot answer that question? Please defeat my second proposition, that the king is a supremely righteous man and he is filled with piety and religion."

The king was standing right there, on his throne. If he were to start speaking bad things about the king, he would be dead. He was absolutely silent. The Queen was watching. "Oh, you cannot answer the second. Defeat my third proposition, that the Queen is chaste and faithful to her husband, just like Savitri." At that point, Kolahala exploded with anger. "You are making such aparadhs. You are offending. How could anyone. If I tried to prove that the Queen is not a chaste woman or that the king is not a pious man, I will be killed. You should be killed for bringing up such nonsense, offensive arguments. You must die, unless you can answer these questions. Answer or die. If you offend the king or queen, your life is finished."

There was the audience, the supporters of Kolahala. They were saying "Yes, yes, he should answer these questions or die." All the Brahmans who really wanted Yamunacarya to win, they were saying "That was not part of the arrangement. Nowhere was this clause, that he had to answer his own questions. The fact is that, Kolahala could not answer. He's lost the debate. Why don't you admit it? Why are you adding this nonsense?" Then there was a big fight between the crowd.

Yamunacarya said, "Everyone, be quiet, Shanti. I will answer my questions. I will defeat these 3 proposals." There was pin drop silence. First proposal, oh dear Kolahala, that your mother is not a barren woman. According to Manu Samhita, "A woman who only has 1 child is considered a barren woman. Because you are the only son, your mother is declared by Shastra, a barren woman."

"Second proposal, that the king of the Pandya Dynasty is the most righteous and pious man. According to Manu Samhita, the King has to accept 1/6th of all the pious activities of everyone in the Kingdom. Also must accept 1/6th of the impious, sinful activities of all of the Kingdom. Because it is Kalyuga, and people are more sinful than pious, therefore, although the king in his personal life is compassionate, moral, righteous. He's the embodiment of piety. Out of his love and sacrifice for all the living beings, he's accepting 1/6th of the sins, and therefore he is not pious."

"The third proposition, I asked you to defeat this, that the Queen is faithful and chaste, only for her husband. We all know that this Queen is the embodiment of all virtues. She is perfectly pure in her heart. She loves and serves her husband with such faithfulness. She's the very embodiment of chastity. However, according to Brahma Samhita, the King represents the 7 prominent demigods; Agni, Varuna, Kuvera, Yamaraj, Indra, Vayu. Therefore, in her service to the king, she's actually serving 7 men simultaneously."

When he said that, the Queen leapt up from her throne with tears in her eyes and cried out "Ala bandara. You have conquered Kolahala." There was a great roar of applaud by everyone in the audience. The king jumped up from his throne, put a garland on little Yamuna and embraced him. Kolahala, all of his false pride became like ashes in the presence of the fire of Yamunacarya's purity. Now the king and queen, they made a wager or a bet before the contest. The Queen said, "If Kolahala defeats little Yamuna, then I will become the servant of the servant of your maidservants." The king said "Oh,

well if little Yamuna defeats Kolahala the great scholar, then I will give Yamuna half my kingdom."

There was a great festival. In the conclusion, the King of Pandya offered half of his kingdom to Little Yamuna. Here he was, 12 years old, now king of vast provinces. When neighbouring kingdoms heard that there was just an inexperienced 12-year-old boy in charge, they started sending their armies to invade and plunder him and conquer him. Yamuna was so intelligent, that he just picked up the military and political systems very quickly, and organized his troops, and defeated everyone that came. Not only did he defeat all aggressors, but he was sending his armies to expand his kingdom.

Years went by. He was a very, very powerful and great king. One problem is that, he was totally distracted from his spiritual practices. So much worried about the domestic social welfare of the citizens and taxations and spies and armies for protection and armies for conquering. Very difficult. Years went by, he never even picked up his Bhagavad Gita or any Scriptures.

Meanwhile, Nathamuni was on his deathbed. He was very old. He renounced everything. He called his most intimate and beloved disciple, name was Ram Mishra. He said, "All my desires have been fulfilled in life, except one. My grandson, Yamuna. He's so much attached to his kingdom and he's so much attached to all the pleasures of his kingdom, and all the amazing sense gratification that's come with it, he has forgotten his spiritual heritage. Now I'm going to die and there's nothing I can do to help him, except pray. I give you this instruction. Make your life and soul, to bring Yamuna, the King, back to the path of pure, unalloyed devotional service."

Ram Mishra came to Madurai and he went to the palace. There were so many kings of other provinces and so many wealthy people and so many ministers and Brahmans coming to meet him. He waited for days. He was just a very unknown, unimportant person. He may never get an audience with the king. He made a plan because he knew the science of Ayurveda. There was a particular type of spinach, and that spinach was not only very delicious, but it brought out the good qualities in a person. It made them healthy and quite effulgent, and helped them to think very clearly.

Ram Mishra, he picked this spinach which was called Tuduvallai, and he brought it to the cook in the kitchen. Said, "I am just an unknown Brahman, but out of my great love and devotion to the king, the great Yamuna, I'm offering this. Please prepare it for him. It will be good for his health and he will like it very much. From the love of my heart, I offer." He spelled so sincerely, that the king prepared this Tuduvallai. Every day, the king was getting it. He became very attached.

Ram Mishra had a plan. One day, he did not come to the back door of the kitchen to deliver the spinach, which actually just grew wild. That day, Yamunacarya, he called for the cook. He said, "Where is the spinach? Every day, you're serving it to me. I like it very much. Why you didn't offer it today?" He said, "There is a Brahman that comes to bring it every day. He doesn't ask any money. No one is like this. Everyone charges. He doesn't ask any money. Even so many days and weeks he's giving and when I offer him something in return he said, "No no, it is because of my great love for the king, that I am bringing this for his good health."

The king was very moved by this. He said, "Next time that Brahman comes, bring him in to see me. I want to meet him." The next day, Ram Mishra came with the spinach and said, "King Yamuna wants to meet you." He went in, and there was a wonderful greeting, an exchange of affection. Ram Mishra said, "I have come with an important

message for you. I am a disciple of your grandfather, Sri Nathamuni. He has left a great treasure that is hidden. He wants me to show you where it is." Yamunacarya was in the middle of battling with so many people who were attacking him. To have proper efficiency in war, you need a lot of wealth. That's just what he needed, is a treasure. He said, "Yes, my grandfather has left me a treasure. Bring me to that treasure."

Ram Mishra sent all the cooks away. Said, "I want to tell you about this alone. This treasure is guarded by 7 gates. It's surrounded by 2 rivers and it's very much diligently guarded by a many-headed serpent. Every 12 years a Yaksha comes, just to check to make sure it's in good condition. The only way to approach it, is by the chanting of mantra. I will take you to this treasure, but you must come all alone with me."

Yamunacarya, he dispatched his duties to his senior leaders and he left alone with Ram Mishra. They walked many, many miles. When the noontime came and the sun was burning hot, they sat under a tree. Ram Mishra recited the entire Bhagavad Gita. Every day, he did like this. When they would sit down to rest in the noon, he would recite Sri Bhagavad Gita. It was the first time Yamunacarya had heard Bhagavad Gita since he was a small boy of 12 years old. It transformed his heart. He fell at the feet of Ram Mishra and said, "You are awakening the spiritual essence within my being that I have so long, forgotten. Thank you, thank you." Ram Mishra said, "Why don't we just stay here for many days and hear Sri Bhagavad Gita?"

Ram Mishra, according to how he heard from Nathamuni, was describing the beautiful passages of Sri Gita. Yamunacarya, just by hearing the words of Lord Sri Krishna, was becoming detached from material life and attached to the loving service of the supreme personality of God. Finally, when Ram Mishra recited the eighth verse of the twelfth chapter of Gita, where Krishna says that "One should fix one's consciousness on me. One should fix one's mind and intelligence on me alone. Then I will bring you back to my abode."

Yamunacarya began to weep and cry, besides himself, in ecstasy. He fell at the feet of Ram Mishra and said, "I will never go back to my kingdom. My life will only be for the loving service of Krishna. In fact, I do not even want the treasure that my grandfather has left for me. I will remain with you in the renounced order of life, worshiping Lord Krishna." Ram Mishra said, "But it is my duty to bring you to the treasure that your grandfather has left."

They walked down and they went through 7 gates in the holy Kshetra Sri Ranga, which is surrounded by, on two sides by the Kaveri river. They went into the alter and there they saw *Ananta-Sesha*, who was guarding the Lord, protecting the Lord. It is said that every 12 years, Vibhishana, the Yaksha comes to do Puja for the deity. By chanting the mantra of the holy name, Yamunacarya was given *darshan* of Sri Ranganatha Swamy.

Ram Mishra said, "This was the only treasure of your grandfather's life. It was his prayer, that you receive this treasure." Yamunacharya chanted the holy names and saw the beautiful form of Ranganath. When Yamunacharya saw that form, his hair stood on end, tears flowed from his eyes and he fell to the ground unconscious and surrendered his life, his soul, his everything at the lotus feet of the Lord. By associating with a sadhu, Yamunacharya became receptive and his heart was open. By his own sincerity, he took shelter of the grace he was receiving, and that is in fact possible for every one of us, may be not immediately, but we must have hope. With that hope, never leave the association of saintly people, never give up our *sadhana*, our spiritual practices. If it takes one birth or ten million births, it doesn't really matter, it's guaranteed if we are sincere. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, he taught, do not try to see Krishna, because if

you try to see Krishna, you will see just some wood or stones, but try to serve Krishna in such a way that Krishna wants to see you, because when Krishna is pleased by our seva, Krishna will reveal himself to us. Krishna will reveal all of His opulences when we open our hearts with sincerity through our desire to serve. Yamunacarya gave the majority of his kingdom to other Pandya kings. He also took a part of his kingdom, specifically put it in the name of Ranganatha, for all of the wealth would be used to serve Sri Ranganatha Swamy in Sri Ranga. He lived in the simplest way as a renunciate.



Kanchipuram Yatra - Lectures by HH Radhanath Swami Maharaj (audio):

http://audio.iskcondesiretree.com/index.php?q=f&f=%2F02_-_ISKCON_Swamis%2FISKCON_Swamis_-_R_to_Y%2FHis_Holiness_Radhanath_Swami%2FLectures%2F02_-_Yatra%2F2005-2006_South_India_yatra%2F02_Kamchipuram

Rameswaram: www.dandavats.com/?p=18620

Sri Ananta Padmanabha Swamy Temple at Trivandrum:
www.dandavats.com/?p=16066

Sri Adikeshava Temple at Thiruvattar: www.dandavats.com/?p=17635

Rajahmundry Yatra: www.dandavats.com/?p=12588

Kanyakumari: www.dandavats.com/?p=21987

Mayapur TV: <http://Mayapur.tv> / **Vrindavana TV:** <http://Vrindavana.tv>

Holy Pilgrimages: www.Holy-Pilgrimages.com
Holy Dham: www.HolyDham.com

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